£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE! SEE INSIDE.

Short Stories.

No. 734.] Week ending January 24th, 1903. [Price One Penny.

Suddenly the door burst open, and before her stood the man who had so nearly killed her husband. "Hide me—hide me!" he gasped in despair.

(A Powerful Incident from our Story, "To Forgive is Divine." See inside.)

Digitized by Google

Kaputine

THE SAFE REMEDY

FOR **HEADACHE** AND **Neuralgia.**

Cures in TEN MINUTES.

For INFLUENZA.

KAPUTINE *immediately* relieves the distressing "Influenza" pains, and *cures* the fever.

KAPUTINE has the confidence of and is recommended by many eminent medical men. KAPUTINE is *not* a single dangerous crude drug, such as has been condemned by the medical papers, but is compos d of *several ingredients*, first discovered thirteen years ago by one of our leading medical men. There is no other remedy like KAPUTINE, the SAFE remedy for Headache and Neuralgia. Ask for KAPUTINE, *and see that you get it and not some dangerous substitute offered for the sake of extra profit.*

KAPUTINE is the ONLY p eparation of its kind used in British and Foreign Hospitals and Infirmaries.

C. E. POPPLESTON, Esq., B.A., Mus. Doc., writing from Exeter College, Oxford, says:

"I have suffered continually from severe Headache. A medical friend advised me to try Kaputine. I did so, and in a few minutes my Headache had left me. It is a splendid remedy."

Packets of 18 doses 1/-,

of all Chemists, Stores, etc., or post free from

KAPUTINE LTD., Huddersfield,

for 12 stamps.

'Let's Talk of Graves' Drapery

.. THE .. **'ECONOMIC'** **BALE**

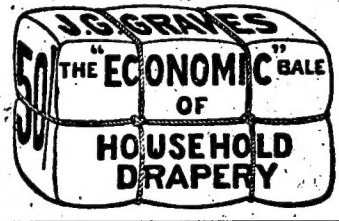
OF HOUSEHOLD DRAPERY.

£2 10s.

CONTAINS: Pair very Best Quality Twilled Sheets, Pair Heavy Blankets with white whipped edges (full size), Superior Quality Red and White or Blue and White Alhambra Quilt (large size), Pair Fine Quality Pillow Slips, 1 Bolster Case, Set of 5 Handsomely Embroidered Toilet Mats, 2 Turkish Towels, Best Quality Glass Cloth, Scouring Cloth, 6 Netted Dusters, Pair Special Design Lace Curtains, 1 Woven Turkey Table Cloth, 1 Embroidered Table Cover 80 in. square, and 1 Full Size White Table Cloth of Fine Quality.

TERMS.

Send only 8/-, the Bale will then be sent to your address (carriage paid), and, if you are satisfied, complete the purchase in six more monthly payments of 7s. each. If not satisfied, return the parcel, and your deposit will be refunded in full.



Send for No. 8 Catalogue of Drapery, Costumes, etc., etc., Post Free.

GOOD AGENTS WANTED in spare time. Persons in regular employment should write for terms. No Risk. Good Commission.

J. G. GRAVES, 69 Division St., SHEFFIELD.

TOOTH-ACHE

CURED INSTANTLY BY

BUNTER'S NERVINE

Prevents Decay; Saves Extraction. Sleepless Nights Prevented.

Neuralgic Headaches and all Nerve Pains removed by BUNTER'S NERVINE. All Chemists, 1s. 1½d.

"As a specific for Toothache it has no equal. I have used it successfully for years."—Prof. W. WILSON, M.D.

THE BEST FAMILY MEDICINE

KAYE'S WORSDELL'S PILLS

Are a certain Cure for Indigestion, Biliousness, Headache, Dyspepsia, Constipation, Liver and Kidney Complaints, etc.

For Ladies of all ages they are invaluable.

Of all Chemists, 1s. 1½d., 2s. 9d., and 4s. 6d. per box.

DRUNKENNESS

CURED. This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. (Room 9), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

PIANO VAMPING (BOOK 18 PACES.)

2/6 to £1 may be earned nightly by anyone having good knowledge of above. A genuine work. Post free, 2/-; Colonies, 3/-. Agent (Dept. A), 16 Eton Rd., Southsea, Hants

Patronised by Royalty.

TRIUMPH Cycles

10 Guineas AND 15 Guineas } Or from a Guinea per month.

The Best Bicycle that British Workmanship can produce.

TRIUMPH CYCLE Co., Ltd., COVENTRY.

& 5, Holborn Viaduct, E.C. 30, Deansgate Arcade, Manchester

3/- THE WORLD'S WONDER. 3/-

OUR BEST CHEAPEST WATCH. With a guarantee to keep correct time for 3 years, will be sent to any address on receipt of P.O. or stamps value 3/- and three stamps extra for postage. For accurate time-keeping equal to any Lady's or Gent's watch costing 5 gs. All we ask of you is to show the Watch to your friends, as by so doing you advertise our business.—SWISS WATCH IMPORTERS, 12, Goswell Road, London, E.C.

Mention "Short Stories."

SUPERFLUOUS HAIR.

Remarkable discovery that will interest every woman with superfluous hair. Perfectly safe treatment that permanently destroys the roots, fully described, FREE to all.

Hairy women need no longer despair. Out of the mass of failures has come a genuine success. Their unsightly blemish can be so thoroughly destroyed that they themselves will wonder if they ever really had disfiguring hair.

The Capillus Mfg. Company are in sole possession of a **marvellous home method** that removes superfluous hair for ever. It goes to the very root of the hair, and destroys its life, so that it will never grow again.

The Company want it understood that this method is different entirely from the many powders, lotions, and cosmetics sold that only remove temporarily and hurt a delicate skin, while this new method removes the hair for all time, and is **simple and harmless.**

It is a home treatment that any lady can easily use in her private apartments, and will permanently remove superfluous hair without pain.

By sending your name and address to the **Capillus Mfg. Company, 57 Century House, Regent Street, London, W**, you will receive a full description of this simple and remarkable method, which will enable you to remove all superfluous hair at home at a very slight expense.

The description is mailed to you free in a perfectly plain and sealed envelope, and you should have no hesitancy in writing. You will be delighted to learn how easily and surely superfluous hair can be permanently and painlessly removed, and it will pay you to write to-day. Don't neglect to do so.

Order E. & T. PINK'S JAM

Undoubtedly the Best.

PURE.

No Artificial Colouring or Chemical Preservative.

SPLENDID SERIAL STORY STARTS SHORTLY.

Short Stories.

No. 734.] For the Week Ending January 24th, 1903. [ONE PENNY.

To Forgive is Divine.

Containing the Incident Depicted on our Cover.

RALPH JACKSON and Bernard Mason were fellow clerks in the bank of Mason and Mason, whose imposing buildings occupied a large share of the tiny High Street of Tamerton.

The bank buildings were indeed a source of great pride to the inhabitants of that small Devonshire town, and Mr. Mason, the leading partner in the firm, was also the leading person in the place, dominating the rest of the population as his beautiful house dominated the town from the rising moorland beyond it.

To be "in the bank" was considered by all the townspeople a signal honour, and Ralph Jackson was envied by more than one of his contemporaries when he was admitted into these sacred precincts at the same time as Bernard Mason, nephew of the senior partner.

Ralph was a general favourite—a handsome Devonian youth, with a dash of devil-may-care audacity about him that appealed mightily to the quieter and more gentle nature of his fellow worker and friend, Bernard Mason.

Bernard's devotion to his cheery and reckless companion was indeed a by-word in the place, and their friendship was frequently compared with the great friendship of old—with that of David and Jonathan—of Damon and Pythias.

As in character, so in face, they presented a great contrast to one another. Ralph's dark complexion—bright dark eyes and vivacious manners, told of some strain in him of other than British blood; whilst Bernard's fair countenance and serene grey eyes proclaimed him, with no uncertain voice, to be Anglo-Saxon through and through.

The two men were constantly together; they shared lodgings in a pretty cottage just outside the town; their free time was always spent in one another's company, and their brief holidays usually consisted of a bicycling or walking tour on the great moor itself—or further afield and—wonderful to relate—the eager, boyish friendship outlived their young days, and when the two men were both close upon thirty, and occupying positions of confidence in the bank, they were still, as ever, the most close and intimate of friends.

Nor was the bond broken when Bernard Mason—now in a position to make a home of his own—asked his cousin Doris to be his wife, and after a very short engagement married her and took her to live in a house at the top of the High Street—a stone's throw away from the bank.

Mason's first wish had been that Ralph should share his and Doris' home, but to this proposition Ralph himself turned an absolutely deaf ear.

"No, no," he said, when both Bernard and his wife pressed him to reconsider his decision; "I am not going to be a disturber of the peace, and no one has any right to live with a newly married pair. Let me be a friend to you both and come in and out occasionally, that is all I ask."

And so it came about that Ralph was a constant guest in the new and happy home, while neither Bernard nor Doris spared any pains to make him feel that he was completely one of themselves—their dearest and best friend! It was the same story when baby Doris came to make a third in that happy household.

All rights reserved.]

Ralph, of course, must be her godfather; she must look upon Ralph as a relation; Ralph must never feel "out of it," because the little family was so complete.

Ralph was still so much to them both—to Bernard and Doris—and they vied with each other in spoiling him and thinking of his welfare until——

* * * * *

"I am a good deal bothered by this—I want to talk it over with you." And James Mason, senior partner in the famous bank, looked up into the face of his son, the junior partner, who stood behind him, and handed him a cheque.

The two men were in the elder Mason's private room, and the younger man took the cheque from his father's hand, and looked at it with a puzzled frown.

"What's the matter with it, dad?" he said, slowly turning it backwards and forwards, "it seems all in order."

"All in order, perhaps," the elder man answered drily "only that does not happen to be my signature!"

"Not your signature?" Richard Mason looked narrowly at the cheque again; "why, dad, I could have sworn to it in a court of law. That queer squiggle in the 'm' is yours down to the ground."

"Hum—yes—very well done—too well done, in fact; it was that which caught the eye of the cashier of our London branch to whom it was presented. He writes, 'Tell me if it is all right.'"

"But he cashed it?"

"Yes—he cashed it at once, seeing my signature, and the cheque not being crossed. But on investigation something about it struck him as unusual, and he sent it off to me post haste."

"Who presented it?"

"That's the terrible part of it, Dick," and the elder Mr. Mason's face grew suddenly pinched and drawn; "this note says, 'the man who cashed the cheque presented also the inclosed note, which further disarmed all suspicion'"—and here—with a little groan, Mr. Mason handed to his son a small, folded piece of paper, on which were written the words:

Please cash inclosed for bearer, who is well known to me.
BERNARD MASON.

"*Bernard!*" Dick Mason staggered back from the table. "Bernard could never have known that——"

"Ah, my dear boy, I have been saying that over and over to myself the whole morning. Bernard could never have guessed that this was an impudent forgery. He must have supposed it was all right; that I really wrote a large cheque for a man called Smith—that——"

"Have you spoken to Bernard?"

"No—no—I could not face it. The elder Mason shuddered a little; "I—you know my dear boy, I have loved Bernard like a son—I cannot bear to think that he—that he——"

"Oh! he couldn't have, you know," said Dick cheerily; "let me call him in and——"

Digitized by Google

His father broke in hurriedly.

"Dick—I wish I could forget that Bernard has had money difficulties lately. I heard it by chance, but on unimpeachable authority. Some investments went wrong; he owes money and I can't get it out of my head that being in a difficulty he—he——"

The old man could not end his sentence, he buried his face in his hands and for a moment a pregnant silence fell over father and son.

The younger man broke it.

"Look here, dad," he said firmly; "we must not let any sentimental feelings interfere with right and justice. If you really think Bernard could have done so incredible a thing—then——but let me call Bernard in," he ended impetuously.

And two minutes later Bernard Mason stood before his uncle and cousin, looking from one to the other, a puzzled inquiry in his eyes.

"Yes," he said gently at last, "did you want me, uncle James? Can I——"

"You can explain *this*," with a strangely dramatic gesture the senior partner swept the cheque from the table, and with it the note signed with Bernard's own name.

"*What—does—this—mean?*"

The words broke at last from Bernard's lips—one by one, and hoarsely—"this is not—could you think——" The hesitating, husky words fell over one another in dreamingless phrases; a sudden and ghastly pallor spread over the speaker's face—his eyes grew wide, startled—to the onlookers they appeared terrified, the cheque and the slip of paper fluttered to the ground, and Bernard's hand went out and grasped at the table.

"My God!" he began; "I——" then something seemed to choke him and he looked at the other two men with a pathetic appeal in his face.

"Do not—do not—be too hard," he whispered; "I—I——" And as he again spoke the monosyllable the pallor on his face became yet more deadly, and with a strange little moan he dropped down like a stone at his listeners' feet.

Over the prostrate form the eyes of father and son met—the anguish and horror on each face reflected on the other.

"Guilty!" the old man murmured brokenly; "guilty! My nephew—the husband of my favourite niece—guilty of forgery—guilty of defrauding *me* who have loved him as a father." And again the white head was bowed upon the clasped hands—through whose fingers there dropped slowly the difficult and painful tears of old age.

On that same afternoon, beside Bernard Mason's bed of sickness his wife sat, silently watching him—her face drawn with agony.

Very pitifully and tenderly her cousin Dick had broken to her the terrible events of the morning—his face growing only more gentle when she cried fiercely:

"And you believe such things of *Bernard?* My Bernard who is the soul of honour! Go—go!" and she pointed indignantly to the door; "and never enter our house again until you can unsay what you have said to me to-day."

Through the long hours since then, Doris had patiently watched beside her husband—who lay, sunk in a deep unconsciousness from which no remedies would rouse him.

Ralph came to and fro, sympathetic, helpful, resourceful—his indignation against those who had accused Bernard, as great as Doris' own.

"Absurd, monstrous!" he repeated many times; "it must be some ghastly mistake!"

"Ah! yes—it must be some ghastly mistake"—that was the thought which repeated itself over and over again in the mind of the faithful wife who sat speechlessly gazing at the face of the man she loved.

The church clock was striking eight when, for the first time during her long watch—Bernard stirred slightly—moaned—and flung out his hand.

"How could you think it was I?" he said quickly, in a strange, monotonous voice. "Am I a cheat—a forger?" Silence for a moment, then the hurried voice began again:

"No—no—you must not question me—I cannot say—I tell you—I cannot say—I must not hurt him. I——" Doris rose and bent over the recumbent form, every pulse in her body beating wildly.

"Tell me, dear?" she said softly; "so you know who forged the cheque.

He opened his eyes at the sound of her voice, but it was plain that he did not recognise her.

"How can I tell of the hurt he has done me?" the rapid voice resumed; "I was never a sneak—not even at school—I can't tell of other chaps. And it was even then—then—ah! I can't remember—why can't I remember?"

Doris sat down again trembling from head to foot, whilst his dim, unseeing eyes looked out across the room.

"Then—then—ah! yes, I have it—then my companion—my guide and mine own familiar friend! Ralph—Ralph—Ralph!"

The cry rang through the room, rang through the house; the sick man—roused perhaps, by the very sound, pulled himself up in bed and looked wildly round him—the fire of delirium in his eyes.

"I knew the hand," he said thickly; "I knew Ralph's hand. We used—to play—at copying letters—for fun—as boys. Mine own——familiar — friend. He forged it—he forged it—and I—I will never tell a soul—not a soul—not a soul"—his voice dropped into indistinct murmurings—he fell back on the pillow again, and then once more cried aloud in a very agony of intreaty: "Ralph—Ralph—Ralph."

There was a step on the stair, the door opened and Ralph Jackson crossed the threshold, a look of profound anxiety on his face. But he was not allowed to enter the room; in the flash of a second Doris barred his way, her eyes bright with anger, a flush upon her cheek—her hands held out as though to push him away.

"How *dare* you come here?" she cried under her breath; "how dare you come to pretend anxiety and sympathy for the man you have struck down. I know all—Ralph Jackson—I know all—and may God forgive you for I never, never will."

Round the little grey house on the top of the moor the wintry wind howled and moaned like myriads of lost souls, as it tore across the uplands. It was a freezingly cold night in the January following the discovery of the forgery at Mason's bank—that discovery which had stricken down Bernard Mason with an illness from which it seemed more than likely he might never recover.

The doctors declared that the shock—due to the discovery of his friend's treachery and crime—had upset a brain already overwrought with work and worry about money matters, and since that fatal morning when he had dropped senseless at his uncle's feet, Bernard had never been himself, although occasional lucid intervals woke hope in the breast of his wife.

By medical advice he had been removed to a house in the most remote part of the moor, where absolute quiet reigned supreme, and in the house Doris sat on that wild January night, listening to the howling tempest without, whilst her thoughts wandered over the past months.

No compunction stirred within her towards the man who had wrought such havoc on her husband's life—only bitter anger surged in her heart and she felt actual gladness in realising that he was expiating his crime in the convict prison not so many miles away. Her information, given to Mr. Mason, and based upon her husband's delirious ravings, led to Ralph Jackson's arrest—and after a stubborn declaration of innocence, lasting throughout his trial, he finally acknowledged his guilt, acknowledging too, that he had intended suspicion to fall upon the friend who loved him—Bernard Mason.

"I never dreamt that Bernard would find me out so

Digitized by Google

quickly," he said to Bernard's wife on the one and only occasion when she visited him, during his trial. "I never meant——"

"Ah!—make no excuses," she had answered bitterly; "criminals *do* mean anything. I can never forgive you for having broken Bernard's heart and life—never."

Thoughts of all this passed through Doris' mind now as she sat in the queer little room of the cottage on the moor. Baby Doris sat beside her. Bernard lay in a bed in the corner because the doctors advised that he should not be carried upstairs—from the kitchen behind came the sounds of a hymn being sung cheerfully and lustily by the kindly woman who did all the work of the house.

A wilder gust of wind rattling the casement roused Doris from her dream; she looked down at the golden head of the child beside her and sighed softly.

"Bedtime, sweetheart," she said, touching the child's soft curls tenderly.

"Doesn't the wind make a ugly great noise, mummy?" The child shrank closer to her mother; "and it's awful cold out there, isn't it? When I say my prayers to-night I'll ask God to take care of everybody out on the moor."

"Oh, I hope nobody is out there to-night, darling," Doris shuddered; "it is snowing hard, and the wind must cut like a knife. I hope nobody is out on the wild moor."

"Please, mummy, may I say my prayers in here?" The child said after a moment; "here, in the warm, where you and daddy are?" and she glanced towards the bed; "then I'll go upstairs with Mrs. Widdecombe like a lamb."

Doris smiled an assent, and the little one, after kissing her mother, knelt down beside a great armchair and clasped her tiny hands. She had finished her customary prayer and paused for a moment, then said, very softly:

"And oh! please, dear God, take care of all the poor people out in the wind and cold—and bring them safe home, and——"

Her innocent words were cut short—a terrific blast shook the house to its very foundation, and at the same instant a knock sounded at the door, making Doris leap round suddenly, a great terror on her face.

"Who is there?" she cried; advancing timidly to the door and lifting the latch, "who——"

The door was flung back, a rush of icy air, a torrent of snowflakes poured into the room, and with them came a man at sight of whom a cry of horror rose to Doris' lips and froze there into silent dismay.

The child knelt on; the sick man on the bed never stirred; the man at the door, and the woman looked at one another silently. Then Doris spoke.

"You?" she cried, "you—and here? How dare you? How could you——"

The man advanced into the room and shut and locked the door behind him, and then little Doris rose from her knees, looking at him with round, amazed eyes.

"Was you out on the moor in the snow?" she asked; "I asked God to bring everybody safely home—so He's brought you here; but why do you wear such funny clothes all covered with arrows?"

A harsh laugh broke from the man, the woman shivered and caught the child against her heart.

"Hush, dear, this man is a bad man," she said bitterly; "he was in prison; that is a prison dress—he has got away, I suppose!"

The scathing scorn in her tones made her listener writhe.

"Doris, forgive me, forgive me," he said coming nearer to her, a pitiful expression on his dark face, now so haggard and worn, so unlike the bright Ralph Jackson of the past—"God knows I have repented; God knows I would give my life to undo the wrong I did to give Bernard back his reason. Forgive me—and—help me—I have been wandering on the moor for two nights and a day," and with a gesture of unutterable fatigue he sank into the arm chair.

Though her soul was brimming over with bitterness against this man, a womanly instinct made Doris bring him a glass of milk from the table and some bread which he devoured ravenously—looking round him the while like a hunted animal.

"Help me to escape, Doris," he said presently; "for the sake of old times, for old friendship forgive me and help me."

The white scorn on the woman's face was terrible to see. For answer she swept back the curtain of the bed and revealed her husband's form sunk in a lethargy that was not sleep; and at the sight the convict bowed his head upon his hands and hot tears dropped between his fingers.

"Poor man," the child whispered, "he's c r y i n g—o h, mummy, please forgive him, 'cos God brought him here."

"Did you know we were here?" Doris turned restlessly upon him. He nodded.

"The last visitor who came to see me told me. I have been creeping over here to you in these weary nights—by day I have hidden where I could—knowing that any moment I might be tracked and caught. Doris—forgive me—save me!"

He slipped from the chair upon his knees in a very agony of appeal, and once more baby Doris spoke.

"Oh! mummy, *please* help him, as God really and truly brought him here. Please help him."

"How can I forgive you? How can I?" Doris moaned; "you have spoilt my life—and his—and yet——"

She looked at the white face on the pillow; "Bernard has so often spoken in his wanderings—and always with love—always wanting to shield you—I—I——"

Breaking off her sentence abruptly she suddenly threw open a door into a tiny inner room.

"Go in there—Bernard's clothes are in the cupboard; change quickly, quickly—lest I should repent. Bernard talks of you still—as if he loved you!"

She turned away with a sob as Ralph vanished into the inner room, to emerge presently, dressed in Bernard's clothes.

"Let me touch his hand just once," he said huskily; "I—have repented. I did what I did in a moment of mad folly, when debts pressed. Let me touch his hand."

Doris bowed her head, she could not speak, and the convict approaching the bed, took the thin hand in his own.

"Forgive me, Bernard," he almost sobbed. At the touch of his hand, the sound of his voice, the sick man's eyes opened in a look of full recognition.

"Why, Ralph," he said. "Ralph, old chap! I never told a soul, old man—I will gladly bear the penalty for you."

"God bless you," the convict's voice was choked and hoarse, "but—there is no penalty to pay, dear old man. You are the best friend a man ever had—but there is no penalty to pay. I—am I going right away—and your uncle and wife know the truth—but there's no penalty—to pay."

A smile flashed over the white face.

"Ah! that's right. I'm glad—you owned up for I should never have told of you. I've been a bit queer, I think, but seeing you has made me well! Good-bye, old chap, good luck to you, and I'm glad you told the truth, and cleared me!"

From that day Bernard Mason slowly recovered and became himself again, but the actual truth was never told him.

Letters sometimes reach him from a far western land where Ralph is carving out a new career for himself; they are the letters of a man who is striving after right.

And Doris whispers to herself sometimes:

"Thank God I helped him that night; thank God I forgave. It has given Bernard back to me." **H. Templeton.**

£5 A Week for Life!

This is the

HUGE PRIZE OFFERED BY *PEARSON'S WEEKLY.*

(*For particulars, see page* 117.)

Digitized by Google

Which Shall Have Her?

Telling of Two Men's Love for a Woman.

"WHATEVER is the matter with you two fellows?" asked Dick Grayling cheerily, addressing his question to two young men about his own age, which was twenty. "You seem to be scowling at each other every opportunity you get, and you used to be the best of chums."

Ralph Connor and Val Ewing looked at him with the same scowl as they were, according to him, bestowing on one another, but they made no reply. All three lodged in the same house, in the general sitting-room of which they were now assembled; Connor and Ewing were telegraph operators, while Grayling was in a solicitor's office.

"If you fellows have had a quarrel," continued Grayling calmly, "the best thing you can do is to let me be arbitrator and square it up. I'll be absolutely impartial, for I don't like one more than the other—I mean, I like you both equally well. Now, out with it, Connor!" he concluded, turning to that young man, because a faint smile had crossed his face at the doubtful compliment of the remark about not liking one any more than the other.

"Well," said Connor slowly, with a sidelong glance at Ewing, "I don't see why we should not settle it that way, if Ewing is agreeable. One has got to give way, that's certain!"

"Of course!" assented Grayling, speaking with the confidence of a man who knows nothing about the matter. "Val will agree!"

"I don't see how you can decide," objected Ewing. "It's *she* who must do that."

"Oh, rivals, eh?!" queried Grayling. "Still, you might just as well permit me to be mediator, so far as possible, for you can't get out of the difficulty by one swallowing the other, which is what you would both like to do, if appearances count for anything!"

Connor and Ewing glanced at one another, and gradually a smile stole over their faces, ending in a laugh. They both appreciated the humorous side of the affair.

"We will put the matter before you, Dick," observed Ewing, straightening himself in his chair, "and perhaps you can advise as to the best way to act. You ought to know something, being a solicitor."

"You see," said Connor, getting to business at once, "I fell in love with her first!"

"Oh, tell that to someone else!" interrupted Ewing wrathfully. "I fell in love with her when I saw her at the soirée, and that was the evening before you——"

"Excuse me!" broke in Connor, stiffly.

Before he could say more, Grayling intervened.

"I'm to be the judge, and I may as well direct the course of proceedings. I gather from the evidence that you are both in love with the same girl; that doesn't require much inspiration to perceive. I don't think it matters an atom who fell in love with her first; the all-important point, in my opinion, is—Does she favour either of you?"

"That's just where the difficulty comes in!" pronounced Ewing. "I am convinced that she would favour me if Connor were out of the way, but while he will push himself forward the girl hasn't a chance to show preference. She's a very tender-hearted, sensitive, good-natured, generous, loving——"

"We'll take the rest of that evidence as read!" declared Grayling judiciously. "But I suspect that Connor thinks she prefers him, but doesn't care to show it in front of you—or, perhaps I ought to say, while you are also a candidate for her favours!"

"Precisely!" agreed Connor admiringly. "You'll make a splendid judge one day, old man!"

"Oh, one gets accustomed to seeing through things quickly in a lawyer's office," remarked Grayling, with pretended nonchalance, although he was really flattered. "I think we ought to adjourn the further hearing of this case till I have been to one or two of these Institute meetings and have seen how she treats you both."

"Won't do!" asserted Connor and Ewing in a breath.

"You must take it for granted," continued the latter, "that she would have one if the other were out of the way, and it is your business to decide how we are to determine which of us shall withdraw."

"I agree that the lady ought to decide that," said Dick reflectively, "and I ought to suggest a way of making her do it that will be fair to each of you and yet not embarrass her. It's a tough case, and we must adjourn for half an hour or so, while I smoke and think it out!"

Rather more than half an hour later he resumed his judicial capacity, but as there was a fourth occupant of the room by that time, the three friends drew their chairs together and Dick whispered his judgment, or plan, in a very unjudicial style, between puffs of smoke and smothered ejaculations. In the end, the two litigants assented, and the case was concluded.

Two evenings later there was a social gathering for young men and women at the Goldhurst Institute. This institute was intended to afford a meeting-place for recreation and amusement, reading and study for the district in which it was situated, and the ruling spirit of the undertaking was Mr. Dalgleish. The place was kept going chiefly by philanthropic persons, and Mr. Dalgleish occasionally organised concerts and lectures for the express purpose of adding to the funds. It was a good work, and he was well assisted by his daughter, a charming girl of nineteen.

This social gathering was an ordinary occurrence, so that there was every chance of obtaining a little chat with Miss Constance Dalgleish. Connor and Ewing sauntered to the entrance together; it was what they had done many times previously, and only a keen observer would have noticed that they looked anxious.

"We had better wait till we see that she is in a position where she will see us as we enter—see us both at once," said Connor. "That will be the fair way. We must do that, or the one she sees first may get the advantage."

"I don't think so, although I have no objection to that proposition," answered Ewing. "I fancy that if we went in separately it would give her the opportunity of asking the one she prefers to help her to transcribe the message. However, let us go in together; she will take the first chance of getting one of us aside, because she will be curious to know what it

Digitized by Google

says, and then the fortunate one seizes his opportunity and the other withdraws."

"Withdraws for the time," corrected the other. "You forget that she may select as interpreter the one she likes least, because she would feel less embarrassed. If Dick put a heart in the corner, as agreed, why that will tell her it is a love message!"

"It's very perplexing," said Connor.

They waited outside the inner door with the glass panels, waiting for the psychological moment; twice they were upon the point of entering, but they drew back because Miss Dalgleish turned her back and became much occupied with a guest. At last they saw the object of their affections gazing steadily at the door and they entered.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Constance Dalgleish in a pleasant tone and with an amiable smile. "I thought you were not coming. Do you know, I want your help."

"Mine?" queried both the young men simultaneously.

Then they felt small and were vexed. Each had thought to make a point, but the simultaneity of the exclamation had made them appear like parrots.

"I will be with you again in a minute! Will you take a seat over there?" And Constance flitted to another part of the room to set a new member at ease, returning quickly to the young men.

"I have an extraordinary communication," she explained, taking a letter from her pocket. "It seems to be written in a kind of shorthand, but it's all dots and dashes, and I've been told that it is the telegraph alphabet. So I thought you could help me."

"Certainly," exclaimed Connor quickly, thus gaining a point over his rival.

"Grayling is an ass!" thought Ewing. "Here's a pretty pickle we are in. She has both of us to tell her, which spoils the idea. No, it isn't Grayling exactly; it's Connor. We ought to have come in separately. I wish I'd had nothing to do with it, but had worked on my own account."

Constance unfolded the paper and disclosed the letter written in the Morse characters. A neatly-drawn heart, with a ring underneath, was designed at the top left-hand corner.

"What is it?" asked Constance innocently.

"Looks like a love letter!" said Ewing boldly, determined not to lose ground. Constance flushed slightly and appeared somewhat uneasy. Ewing took this for a sign that she had a preference for him, and this time he said hard things under his breath about Grayling. How could the girl show any preference while Connor was there?

"I think you must be mistaken," she answered. "I don't think that anyone—— Now, what is the meaning of this first hieroglyphic, a dot and a dash?"

"That is A. And the next, which begins a word, is B; it's a dash and three dots, you see. The letter begins 'A beautiful young lady.' The next sign is W. It seems to be very complimentary, Miss Dalgleish!"

Constance appeared perplexed, but the flush left her cheeks a moment later, and she sat staring at the letter. Connor and Ewing, eager to make points, alternately deciphered a word or two of the missive, oblivious of the fact that she was paying no attention.

The letter was to the effect that the beautiful young lady had captured the hearts of two men, and it besought her to make a selection promptly in order to dissipate the suspense and anxiety of the aspirants for her heart and hand. She was requested to return the letter, with her initials at the foot, to the one who was dearest to her.

"That's a peculiar billet-doux!" remarked Ewing, when the process of deciphering was completed and Constance made no sign.

"Very strange," chimed in Connor.

The young fellows felt decidedly uncomfortable. They had expected that Constance, suspecting the nature of the communication and its source, would select one of them to explain it, and that one would have been able, circumstances being favourable, to press his suit. But what could they do together? They glanced at one another sheepishly at first, but fiercely as the seconds sped away and Miss Dalgleish did not speak.

"I think that someone—that is, two persons—must have made a mistake," she said at last, looking up with a worried expression on her face, which had grown quite pale. "I must think this over. I am greatly indebted to you for helping me to find out what it means, and now you must excuse me as I have to see how they are getting on."

"What does that mean?" asked Connor, staring at Ewing. "A mistake?"

"Maidenly shyness, that's all," cried Ewing jubilantly. "You could hardly expect the girl to declare herself to one in the presence of the other, and she didn't wish to hurt the feelings of the unfortunate by as good as telling him to his face that he was rejected. That's a little stratagem to postpone matters. Look here, old fellow, you might as well go home and leave the field to me! It's a dead certainty that I'm the lucky beggar! Didn't you see the glance she gave me?"

"You!" exclaimed Connor sarcastically. "Whatever made you think she wanted you? I expect she will send that letter to me, but I hope to goodness she doesn't muddle our names!"

They waited for Constance to come and have another chat with them; they parted company, and tried to join in the merriment of others, but they found the social gathering very flat without her, and she did not seek them out. At half-past ten the entertainment was over and the visitors began to leave. Connor and Ewing lingered till the last, and then they walked up to Mr. Dalgliesh and his daughter to bid them good night.

"Good night, Mr. Connor. Good night, Mr. Ewing," said Constance, forcing a smile and making an effort to speak easily.

She did not hold herself with her usual grace and suppleness of figure; there was an effort to attract attention, quite uncommon with her. She raised her left hand to her throat as she shook hands with them, and this was clearly done so that they should look at it. They could not fail to observe it, and their hearts seemed to stand still as they did so. On the third finger of that left hand was an engagement ring!

The two young fellows did not speak a word till they found themselves in the sitting-room of their lodgings. Connor was the first to break the silence.

"She never wore it before this evening, Val, so the engagement must be new.

"No!" assented Ewing moodily. "And all the time we thought that she was falling in love with us, because she looked pretty and confused when we were gallant, and because her natural sweetness of disposition prompted her to be amiable, why, she was thinking of the other fellow! That was what made her confused when we paid her certain compliments and attentions. I am inclined to think that she never guessed that we were hit, or she would have said something to stop it."

"Yes," agreed Connor. "But she told us the truth in a neat way. Spared our feelings. Is Dick in bed? I think I should like to punch him for suggesting that silly plan. If we had waited we should have learnt the truth without betraying ourselves. I shall emigrate!"

"I shall try for a job in the country!" growled the other. "We shall appear pretty foolish!"

However, while they were awaiting the desired transfer to another post, their annoyance wore off, and they were able to see the humorous side.

As a result they were present at the marriage of Constance three months later, and wished her happiness in all sincerity.

George Day.

Digitized by Google

A JEWEL ROBBERY AND A BOOK.

The Tale of a Deep-Laid Scheme.

Although I broke into my friend Jackson's room in a manner that was not remarkable for its gentleness, it did not seem to disturb him in the least, for he continued calmly reading the book that he held in his hand, in which he appeared deeply engrossed.

This fact was suspicious in itself, for Jackson is not a man to take up a novel in the small hours of the morning. It seemed evident to me that he had recognised my step on the stairs, and having a history prepared about the book, he had taken it up as an excuse for telling the tale.

I hesitated a moment whether to advance or retire. Then I thought that the day was yet young, and Jackson's stories were worth hearing, and his cigars were very good.

So I ventured on a cough. Jackson continued reading. I tried again to attract his attention.

"Well, old man," I said heartily, "good evening. I thought I would just look in as I was passing."

Still it pleased Jackson's plans to ignore my presence, and it was not until I had crossed the room and stood directly between him and the light that he deigned to look up with a very well feigned start of surprise.

"Well," he said, springing to his feet, and shaking hands heartily, "I declare I never saw you come in. Why didn't you speak? Sit down, man, and make yourself at home."

He turned down the leaf he was reading of his precious book with much ostentation, and with a sigh laid it regretfully on the floor.

"Studying?" I suggested.

"No," he replied, "just peeping into a little book that has been unopened on my shelf for about five years. It was a most extraordinary thing altogether," he continued, gazing meditatively at the fire.

"What," I inquired, "was extraordinary?"

"Why," said Jackson, "that I should meet the author of this book this evening as he was coming down the steps of the Empire. A man, mind you, that one has not heard of for five years, although at one time his reputation was world-wide. You know him by name, no doubt. Job Roy, the man who wrote 'Stones of Great Value.'"

"Job Roy? I don't know him," said I.

"You don't know Job Roy?" cried Jackson. "You have never heard of 'Stones of Great Value'?" He sprang to his feet, and his voice fairly shrieked with excitement. He took up the book, and showed me the number of editions it had run into, then threw it on the floor, and would have raved about the ignorance of the modern man of letters for the rest of the night, had I not calmed him.

"You must remember," I said, "that we are not all so well up in men and things as you are, and that we journalists have to discuss so many subjects in the course of the year, that it is not surprising that we forget about them all. Now sit down and calm yourself, and tell me all about it from beginning to end."

"It's a long story," said Jackson, sinking back in his chair, "but when a journalist comes to me, and tells me he has never heard of Job Roy, I certainly think it is time that I should refresh his memory for his own good. Besides," he continued, gradually getting under weigh, "it's a story of your own trade; the story of a great 'boom;' the first boom in literature of modern days. For it is only quite recently, you understand, that men took to making little wars on their own account, and exploring out-of-the-way lands, and writing books on subjects, and making their fortunes in this way.

"The beginning of Job Roy's literary career, then," went on Jackson, while I was feeling for my note-book and pencil, "was the orthodox beginning of famous writers. He threw up a good trade, invested in a garret, a ream of foolscap, and a shilling's-worth of ink and pens, and proceeded to waste them as fast as human hands could work. His stories went the orthodox round of publishing houses, and returned to him in the orthodox way, having gained nothing but a vast accumulation of dirt. He came to the end of his resources, starved for a day, and was just giving up in despair when an idea suddenly took birth in his mind, which he immediately put on paper and sent out on its travels. It returned to him, of course, and, after living for half a year on his landlady's money, he took it to the last publisher he could think of, who gave more hope than the other—all in the orthodox way.

"This publisher, you must know, had just set up business when Job Roy called on him, and had plenty of time in which to read stories by unknown authors, and plenty of knowledge in his trade to recognise a good investment when it came his way.

"He promised to read Job Roy's novel, and let him hear in a day or two what he thought of it. He read through the story, and, having satisfied himself that it might make a book under certain conditions, and that those conditions would never be realised, he sent round for its author.

"'This book,' he said, smiling sweetly at Job Roy as he stood expectantly before him, thus raising his hopes to the utmost, 'is a very good book, but,' he continued, dashing all hopes to the ground, 'would probably, under the ordinary conditions, have no sale at all.'

"Job Roy's face turned pale.

"'What do you say?' he stammered. 'It is a good book, and yet it would have no sale? How can that be?'

"'It's a book, you see,' replied the publisher, 'that people would take no notice of unless it were forced under their eyes. In fact, it is a book that must be 'boomed' to go. It must be forced along, shoved, hurried into attention, have some scandal raised about it, so that it can't be disregarded. Unless we can do that, all that remains for your book is this'—and the publisher kicked a new wastepaper basket in which he had invested, and Job Roy groaned aloud.

"When he had gone the publisher lit a cigarette, and fell to considering again the manuscript that lay before him. And the more he thought about it the more he was determined that there was merit in the book, and merit, properly applied, that would not only make its author's fortune, but make him, the publisher, both rich and famous. Then he wavered again, and determined that it was too risky a venture for a new publisher to undertake, and he threw away his cigarette, put the book aside, and began reading the morning paper.

"As he glanced down the columns a certain little paragraph caught his eye. It ran as follows: 'The Duchess of Lesborough's jewels are not only the most beautiful, but among the most valuable in London at the present time. They are valued at £50,000, although the Duchess would not part with them for more than twice that sum. They have been in the family for a long while, and she looks upon them as sacred heirlooms.'

"Now, Job Roy's novel, 'Stones of Great Value,' was entirely founded on the idea of a great jewel robbery, and it was for this reason that the paragraph I have quoted caught the publisher's eye. And the stones of great value of Job Roy's estimation were set down as being worth about the

Digitized by Google

same amount as the Duchess of Lesborough's jewels—and the jewels of the story also belonged to a duchess. All that was required to complete the resemblance between fiction and reality was for the genuine duchess to be robbed of her stones.

"The thought that it would be rather curious if this should happen by any strange chance occurred to the publisher. And as he was thinking an idea came to him.

"He leant back in a chair and closed his eyes, and the possibilities of the idea passed before him. Never for an instant did it leave his mind for the remainder of the day. He took it away with him at night, and thought of it, and dreamt of it—this great idea.

"On the following day he went through all the daily and weekly papers on which he could lay his hands, and every now and again he came across a little paragraph about the Duchess of Lesborough's jewels. It was evident that these paragraphs, praising the beauty of the stones, estimating their great value, and declaring them to be the sacred heirlooms of an old family, were, one and all, written by one hand, and that hand, a woman's; none other, in fact, than that of the Duchess of Lesborough herself.

"Having satisfied himself that her Grace was striving very hard to advertise her jewels, for what purpose she alone knew, and always with his great idea in his mind, the publisher set about finding out all that he could concerning the stones in question.

"It was not long before he discovered that her Grace had purchased them from a leading merchant only a few months previously.

"He also discovered that the Duchess herself was an American heiress, who had followed the fashion of marrying a Duke for his title, and that now that he was dead she was trying her utmost to make her way into Society.

"All this fitted in very well with the plans that the publisher had devised.

"Having come to this conclusion, he sent again for his friend the author—for in their mutual lack of money, and their mutual desire to gain it, a kind of friendship had sprung up between them.

"Job Roy came—in a cab.

"For three hours the two men remained closeted, with their heads together, talking. Then Job Roy went out and ordered an oyster supper, while the publisher swung round on his pivot chair, and wrote the smartest business letter that he had ever penned—a letter so forcible, cunning, and clearly put, that it could not fail to carry effect. Having read this through and satisfied himself that it lacked nothing, he put it in an envelope, and addressed it to 'Her Grace the Duchess of Lesborough.'

"The reply came by return of post in a scented, heavily-crested letter.

"'Dear Mr. Publisher,' it ran, 'Your letter to hand. What a funny idea! You had better come and have tea, and tell me all about it.—Yours sincerely, Dolly Lesborough.'

"Accordingly, the publisher went to tea that afternoon.

"He found the Duchess in a room that seemed literally to teem with silver, every other object seemed plated with gold. He trod on a carpet that sank like a bed of feathers beneath his feet. A large, American-looking hand, almost covered with rings, was held out to him. He took it mechanically, and found a pretty, merry face above—a very jolly face for a Duchess.

"The publisher recovered himself quickly. He immediately let off the compliment with which he had prepared himself on the way.

"'I am delighted to note,' he muttered, bowing low, 'by your letter that I received to-day, that the business qualities of the Duchess of Lesborough are not less deserving of praise than her beauty.'

"Her Grace laughed merrily, and clapped her hands.

"'Now, that's real nice of you,' she replied, 'for I have always reckoned that I am about as smart a business woman as they make. Didn't I hook the Duke and his title within a fortnight, in spite of all the bets that were made at the clubs? Now he, poor fellow, has been carried off by his gout, I am thrown on my own resources to get along as best I may.'

"'I notice,' said the publisher, 'that your jewels have already become famous.'

"'That's so. When the Duke died I bought all the jewels and trinkets that I could find. That's what you English seem to admire more than anything else. A woman with jewels is bound to succeed. Though, somehow,' added her Grace, with a sigh, 'your Society ladies don't exactly seem to rush to me with open arms.'

"'You must remember,' said the publisher, 'that, famous as they are, everyone has not yet heard of your jewels.'

"That's quite true. Say, Mr. Publisher, how am I to get them known?"

"The Duchess sipped her tea from a priceless little blue china cup, and looked meditatively over the rim at the publisher.

"'It was for the purpose of telling you how to do that,' replied he, 'that I called this afternoon. If you will leave everything to me I will guarantee that within three weeks the Duchess of Lesborough's jewels will be more talked about than any other jewels in London.'

"'La!' cried the Duchess, executing a *pas de seul*, 'and how much do you want for doing that?'

"'Only two little things. First, that you will promise not to allow your jewels to be seen by anyone until I tell you you may; second, that you will procure a dummy set before to-morrow.'

"'Done,' cried the Duchess. 'Anything else?'

"'In the afternoon I shall ask you to go for a drive. Before you go, I want you to tell your secretary, steward, butler, anyone you like, that you are going to take your jewels to the bankers. Circulate it among your household, so that everyone is talking about it. Do you think you are good enough actress to do all that without arousing suspicion?'

"'Rather!' The Duchess elevated her toe, and contemplated it. 'First an actress, then a millionairess, then a widow, then a Duchess——'

"'Then,' added the publisher, 'the first lady in British society, second only to the Queen herself.'

"'When will the fun begin?' she asked eagerly.

"'To-morrow evening,' said the other. 'But you must be very careful. How do you think these headings will look in the papers?'

"The publisher produced some carefully written manuscripts and laid them before the Duchess. The headlines were startling enough: 'The Duchess of Lesborough's Jewels—Stolen—Valued at £50,000—The Duchess Inconsolable — Clever Robbery—No Trace of the Thief—Scotland Yard Baffled.' Following these were several striking accounts of the robbery, of the jewels, and the Duchess, sufficiently exciting to produce a flutter among the evening papers, to which they would be dispatched.

"The Duchess was delighted.

"'But what am I to do with my diamonds?' she inquired.

"'Bury them,' said the publisher, 'or hide them somewhere where no one will find them. If anyone suspects it is a trick we shall be ruined for ever. I implore you to be careful.'

"'You may trust me. Now, is there anything else I can do for you? A thousand or two don't make such odds to me, you know!'

"'Thanks. I certainly have a little scheme on hand that requires financing. I am going to

Digitized by Google

publish my first book very shortly. As I told you in my letter, it's all part of my scheme. The book deals entirely with a jewel robbery, and the jewels are supposed to be yours. When all the excitement is over, the book will be published, and everyone will read it. The whole affair, your Grace, is a gigantic boom, first for a Duchess, then for an author, and, lastly, for a publisher. And it all requires financing.'

"'Well, how much do you want?'

"The publisher named a modest sum. The Duchess promised to forward it, on receiving security that the publisher would carry out his part of the bargain. After going through the scheme carefully once more he took up his hat and said good-bye.

"On the day following the one on which the publisher called on the Duchess of Lesborough, her Grace procured a dummy set of diamonds from a small jeweller.

"Having given her order she returned home, and gradually made it generally known among her household that in the afternoon she would take her jewels to the bankers.

"About one o'clock the imitation stones arrived, and her Grace sat down to as hearty a luncheon as ever a Duchess consumed. She ordered her carriage for half-past two.

"'Tell them to drive to the bank," she said, as she stood on the steps. 'I am going to leave my jewel-box there.'

"'To the bank,' whispered the butler to the footman.

"'To the bank,' said the footman to the coachman, 'Her Grace is going to lock up her jewels.'

"And the carriage drove away.

"Apparently, however, the Duchess changed her mind, for she gave orders to be driven first to an outlying district, where it was imperative that she should pay some early calls.

"'I will go to the bank on my way home,' said she.

"In the meanwhile an incident occurred at the Duchess of Lesborough's residence. It seemed that the carriage had barely turned the corner of the street, when Her Grace discovered that she had left her jewel-box behind. She had, apparently, sent her footman running back to bring her the precious box, for a man, who, it afterwards transpired, was disguised in every particular as her footman, requested the butler to give him Her Grace's case, which, as he declared, she had left on her dressing-table.

"The butler ran upstairs and found the box, and hastened with it to the footman, who hurriedly carried it away down the street.

"That, however, was the last that was ever seen of the rascal.

"About four o'clock the Duchess had finished her calls, and ordered 'Home.'

"She was reminded by her servant that she had wished to call at the bank.

"'Oh, yes, to the bank,' she replied, and then, 'Why, dear me, I must have left my jewel-box behind. How careless! Well, I will take it to-morrow.'

"The Duchess had come a long way out to pay her calls, and it was nearly six before the carriage neared home.

"It was then she heard the newsboys calling her name in the street. 'The Duchess of Lesborough's jewels,' they cried, 'Stolen!—Valued at £50,000—Clever Robbery!—Evening paper!'

"She procured a copy, and the coachman, with a white face, galloped the horses homewards.

"Holding the paper as best she could with the jolting of the carriage, her Grace read the account of the imaginary robbery of her jewels, which, in reality, as she well knew, were snugly stowed away in the family safe. She smiled as she thought how smartly the publisher had done his work.

"Her secretary met her at the door of the house, and hastily began explaining things. A man, disguised as her footman, had discovered—how, Heaven alone knows—'although,' said the secretary, 'suspicion pointed to the butler as having helped him,' that her Grace had left her jewel-box behind her. He had received the box from the butler and had gone off with the stones. Another mystery—an account of the whole affair had appeared in the evening newspapers.

"Never, even in her ballet-girl days, had the Duchess acted so brilliantly as when she ordered her whole household up before her and questioned them as to the robbery of her jewels. All, however, to no effect. The mystery was as unexplainable as ever, and the Duchess left it to the public and to the press to discover what they could.

"The latter took up the matter eagerly. It had come at a time when news was scarce, and the public seemed deeply interested in the jewel robbery. On the next day the papers that claimed to have discovered a clue sold like wild-fire. Some accused the butler, some the footman, others her Grace's secretary, of having stolen the jewels. Their movements were carefully watched by the police, but all with no result. The whole affair was as pretty a mystery as had ever puzzled the public, and the press made the most of it. The Duchess' jewels were being 'boomed' as jewels were never 'boomed' before.

"Three days later public interest was beginning to flag, for nothing new turned up.

"On the evening of the third day the Publisher and the Author met together over a little dinner in the former's rooms.

"Over the wine the Publisher remarked: 'To-morrow, I think I shall arrest you.'

"For a man about to be arrested, however, the Author appeared to take the matter very coolly.

"'You think it is the best time?' he remarked, flicking the ask from his cigarette.

"'I think so. Public interest is beginning to flag a little. I will come about twelve, if you will be up by then. I want you to be gazing meditatively down the muzzle of a revolver and to babble like a baby about a jewel robbery and a confession and suicide. Think you can manage all that?'

"'Easily,' said Job Roy. 'Every author is three-parts actor.'

"'Good! I shall judge whether your arrest causes a sensation or not. If so, I shall leave things for a day or two before I have you released. Or if the magistrates are too sharp for us, and begin to suspect that it is all a put-up affair, I shall hurry things on to a crisis. Anyway, you may rest assured that they won't keep you more than a day or two, for it wouldn't be safe to let them. By the way, you might as well copy out this confession now.'

"The Publisher took a new book, uncut, and looking as though it had come straight from the press, called 'Stones of Great Value,' by Job Roy, and, opening it at a certain page, handed it to the author.

"On this page the principal character in the story confessed to having stolen the stones of the fictitious Duchess. 'Dear friend,' ran the confession, 'I can no longer live while another man is suspected of having committed a crime of which I am guilty. I have decided to solve two mysteries by blowing out my brains. For it was I who stole the Duchess' jewels. When this reaches you I shall be dead.' There was much more of the same kind, and at the foot of the confession were the initials 'J.R.,' which, should the page be found lying about loose, might be taken for the name of either the hero of the story or for Job Roy, the name of the author of the book. It might, indeed, be rather awkward for Job Roy if the confession of the hero in 'Stones of Great Value,' written in the author's own handwriting, and signed with his initials, should fall into the hands of the police at a time when the genuine Duchess of Lesborough had really lost her diamonds.

"He began to copy out the confession on a piece of foolscap, so that it began at the top of the page, and ended with his

Digitized by Google

initials at the bottom. When he had finished it he handed it over to the publisher, who put it safely away.

"'To-morrow,' he cried, 'our plans will be reaching their fulfilment. We have boomed the Duchess' diamonds, and to-morrow you will be boomed, and three days later your book. Let us drink to unqualified success.'

"On the following day a man, dishevelled, waving a paper, rushed wildly into the nearest police station from Job Roy's lodgings.

"'See,' he cried, 'here is a confession of the man who stole the Duchess of Lesborough's jewels. Come and take him quick before he blows out his brains. A friend of mine, Job Roy by name, a bit of an author,' and before the astonished constables had time to realise the state of affairs, they found themselves being hurried along in a cab to Job Roy's rooms.

"The door was locked. A policeman put his shoulder to it, and burst it open. At a table, muttering incoherently to himself, was the author of 'Stones of Great Value.' To knock down the pistol and to handcuff him was the work of a moment.

"That evening the whole report of the thief's arrest appeared in the papers. Public excitement was again roused to its utmost. When the Job Roy trial came on the court was crowded.

"Nothing could be gained from the prisoner, for he could only mutter senseless words about a book and a confession. This confession was the sole evidence that there was against him. As the magistrates remarked, it seemed much more likely that either the butler or the secretary had done the deed. The magistrates were about to remand the prisoner for a week in order that the police might make inquiries about the confession, the people were rising from their seats to leave the court, when something happened that drew every eye from the prisoner to the figure of a man who now appeared in court, and caused a sensation that has not yet been forgotten by the police.

"'Your worships,' said a police inspector, stepping forward, 'I wish to make an important statement. This gentleman, a book publisher, informs me that the confession, on the strength of which the prisoner was arrested, is *merely this stray leaf out of a novel he was writing.* The poor gentleman, thinking no doubt that the publisher had refused his work, had temporarily lost his mind, and this accounts for the reason why he was not able to clear himself from the ridiculous charge of robbery. The book, your worship, deals entirely with a jewel robbery, and is called "Stones of Great Value."'

"And that," said Jackson, "is the end of my story. The plot has gradually unfolded itself. The Publisher's great idea has worked itself out to the end. He had boomed the Duchess of Lesborough's jewels; the Author's name was in every mouth; thousands of copies of the book were sold. Author, Publisher, and Duchess were made famous.

"As I told you, I met Job Roy to-day on the steps of the Empire, fat and well-fed. And what seems the most remarkable part of the whole affair to me is that this book, 'Stones of Great Value,' was once world-famous, and is now almost totally forgotten."

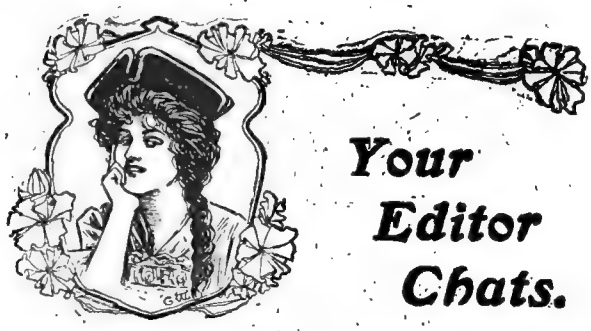
It occurred to me as a crept out of Jackson's rooms at the break of day, that even this fact was not so remarkable as Jackson's imagination.

Maud Tinwell.

Boy: "I want to buy some paper." Dealer: "What kind of paper?" Boy: "You'd better give me fly paper. I want to make a kite."

"That was a pretty hat that Mrs. Jones wore last night," he suggested. "Pretty?" she exclaimed with infinite scorn. "Why, I happen to know that that hat only cost fifteen shillings."

Poet: "I hope you have received the little volume of poems I ventured to send you." Baroness: "Oh, yes, I have—it is charming—I wonder where I have put it." Little Karl: "Under the leg of the table, mamma, to make it steady."



In a few weeks' time I shall be starting yet another powerful serial story. The name of the author is familiar to readers of *Short Stories*, and the reputation which he has gained for tales of remarkable power is fully maintained in this new one.

Meanwhile, I am preparing a further series of articles to follow the adventures of Belinda, and I don't think that you will be disappointed when you read them. I may say that they will differ considerably from Cynthia or Belinda, and in this way we shall obtain a freshness of style and of ideas that will be, I hope, much appreciated.

The offer made by "Dayton," the reader of *Short Stories* who made his fortune, has been very much appreciated, and a huge number of readers have sent in to justify their claim to the sums of £10. The result of the first competition will be announced next week. Those readers who have not already written in to give a reason why they should receive the £10 should do so at once. If they are not personally in want of the £10, then they would be doing a good turn to some needy friend to whom the cash would prove a boon and a blessing. On page 111 you will find another coupon which is the last one that will appear.

A correspondent wants to know why we do not put more illustrations in *Short Stories*, as he is very fond of looking at pictures, and thinks that more sketches would help to make the paper more popular. This, of course, at first glance is quite a reasonable view to take of the matter, but there are two very great objections.

One is that unless a story contains incidents which lend themselves to strong and vigorous pictures, it is not worth while illustrating. The ordinary man-and-woman-facing-each-other class of illustration is of no interest whatever to anybody and is better left out altogether. The stories in this little paper are full of powerful incidents, but these are described verbally, and a verbal description of a strong incident does not always lend itself to illustration.

The second objection is that every illustration displaces a certain amount of reading matter, and, after all, readers of *Short Stories* buy the paper for the sake of the stories and although an occasional bright illustration is very much appreciated, I am sure that to fill the paper with a lot of big sketches at the expense of a number of words would not be liked.

Your Editor.

Digitized by Google

HOW I CHAPERONED BELINDA.

By Lady Peggy Carstairs.

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

LADY PEGGY CARSTAIRS. A widow, who, having lost all her money in a bank failure, undertakes to chaperon Belinda.

BELINDA NORTH. The beautiful daughter of Hardy North, an Australian millionaire.

DUKE OF EASTACRES. A comparatively penniless suitor for Belinda's hand.

DAVID CARR. A young engineer, with whom Belinda is in love.

STANLEY FORBES. A famous barrister.

SHEILA KENWYN. Forbes' cousin, whom Eastacres has wronged.

ALPHONSE HERVÉ. A celebrated French artist in love with Belinda.

PAUL DE SONNAZ. A young French nobleman and friend of Lady Peggy.

BARON ROLLA. An extremely wealthy Parisian, in love with Belinda.

Belinda Comes to England.

SUDDENLY there was a terrific thundering at the door and the next instant Stanley Forbes stood before the Duke.

I had always admired Stanley Forbes, always thought him one of the strongest and bravest of men, but never did I realise just how strong he was until that night. He dwarfed Eastacres mentally and morally and physically. Before him the Duke collapsed literally and absolutely. He seemed to shrink visibly, and I felt a touch of apprehension as I marked how Stanley towered above him.

It was all over in a moment. A short, sharp struggle, and his Grace, the Duke of Eastacres, was lying in an undistinguished heap upon the floor, with Stanley standing over him, shaking with passion. As to my feelings at that moment they were very varied. Relief at Belinda's escape—I verily believe Eastacres meant to kill her—mortification at the collapse of the scheme, admiration for Forbes warred one against the other.

"Get up," said Stanley at last. "Get up and clear off before I kill you. It is like you," he went on with a bitter sneer, "to match yourself against a girl. With me you were afraid to try conclusions. You only dared to plot against me in the dark. And even then you failed. You killed poor Adams certainly, but you failed in your attempt to ruin me. My horse won the race. I have won my money and you"—he jeered as Eastacres staggered to his feet—"you are beaten at all points. What," as the Duke glanced savagely round the room seeking for a weapon of attack. "Are you going to try that sort of game? No use, my friend, no use." As he spoke he threw back the door and motioned the Duke to go.

Eastacres slowly walked across the room. "And Miss North," he sneered, "she will remain here with you?"

"Miss North will accompany me to where her friends await her," Stanley replied.

"Those friends will be gratified to learn where she has spent the evening," said Eastacres. "Paris generally will be amused."

"I think not," said Stanley calmly. "I think you are too astute a scoundrel not to hold your tongue, when I inform you that at the first word of slander from your lips about Miss North, I charge you openly with an attempt to murder Adams. I mean it, and—I shall prove my case. Only on that condition do I let you go. You hear me?"

The Duke made no answer, but with a look of concentrated venom, hate, and bitterness, passed from the room.

I did not wait to hear the explanation that ensued between Belinda and her rescuer, but hastily made my way downstairs, and waiting till the figure of the Duke had become absorbed in the darkness, made my way in the direction of Paris, stopping the first *fiacre* that I met.

I arrived at the Hotel D'Auteuil to find the place in an uproar. The Marquise in hysterics, Rolla in a state of mind bordering on distraction, while Paul, very white about the mouth, walked to and fro in an excited state.

"What has happened?" I asked. "Has Belinda been found? Has anything been heard or discovered? I am half distracted with anxiety."

Paul seemed relieved at my arrival. Drawing me aside, he told me how matters stood.

"Rolla has made the most careful and discreet inquiries at the British Embassy," he said, "but he has been assured that no one answering to Carr's description has been there. In desperation and alarm I went to Stanley Forbes and asked him what was to be done. He told me that he knew where Belinda was, that in fact she had gone shopping with his wife, and he promised to bring her here within the hour. That hour is now all but past," and he glanced anxiously at his watch, "they have not yet come."

Even as he spoke the wheels of a carriage sounded on the asphalt outside. A minute later Belinda entered, followed by Stanley and his wife.

A little pale, perhaps, and a trifle self-conscious, but otherwise she showed no trace of all she had gone through.

"I'm afraid you've been quite anxious, Lady Peggy," she said sweetly. "I suppose I have behaved rather badly. It certainly wasn't a right thing to go off without a word of explanation. But you see I saw Sheila just after the race, and she was so upset at poor Adams' accident that I felt obliged to try to comfort her. To make a long story short, we went and had some tea together, took a turn in the Luxembourg, and went for a drive in the Bois to finish up with. I went home with her for a late, a very late dinner, and found Mr. Forbes waiting for me. He was terribly cross, and vowed I should get a fearful scolding. You don't look very forbidding all the same," and with that the girl kissed the Marquise, smiled on me, and sat down as self-possessed as possible.

Digitized by Google

Her account of the evening's procedure gained credence from the Marquise, and, I think, Baron Rolla. Paul was more sceptical; whether or no Belinda told him the truth I cannot say; he made no mention of the matter to me.

Belinda, inspired by Stanley, most astute of lawyers, did not confide in me—the one person to whom she should have confessed. Early next morning, however, Stanley called at the hotel, and in a short but spirited interview, told me that if I continued to countenance the Duke's attentions to Belinda—if, in short, I tolerated his society or acknowledged him as friend, he would then and there write such an account of my chaperonage of Belinda as would cause her father to remove his daughter on the instant from my care.

"There's no need for me to go more minutely into the matter," he said in conclusion, "you and I understand each other, Lady Peggy. At least I hope we do—for your sake." And with a curious smile he departed, leaving me with years added to my age!

Only on one point could I take comfort. Belinda, at all events, did not suspect me of connivance with the Duke. Of that I was quite sure; otherwise, so honest was this child of nature, that she would have left me, and gone straight to her Australian home. This being so, I might still gain my end, still win my £20,000. Beaten at one point, I could re-form and carry the day at another.

I hoped and prayed for better luck at my next venture in marrying Belinda!

We left Paris the last day in May, *en route* for an old friend's place in Hampshire. We were going to stay at Lady Haviland's, a charming old manor house dating back to the reign of Charles I. The London season was late that year, and about the middle of June Belinda and I were booked for a short stay with the Duchess of Staunton in Brook Street. Till then, however, we were going to recuperate at Havilands Manor.

We arrived at the little country station about five. There was a small knot of people already on the platform bound like ourselves for Havilands. I recognised Hugh, Lord Farringdon, Lady Molly Vansittart, and the Marquis of Towchester. The rest of our fellow guests were of the usual kind, smart, up-to-date, ready to flirt with anybody's husband or anyone's wife but their own. Not that one is troubled much with one's legitimate partner nowadays. It is in fact bad form to ask married couples to the same house party. No one realised this more fully than Lady Haviland. Her parties were always arranged with the utmost tact. Her week-ends were simply delightful; many an *affaire* commenced at the Manor.

I daresay you who read these articles will like to know something of the life in a country house among our set. I will do my best to satisfy your curiosity. To begin with, the usual hour to arrive is between five and six. You go straight to your room, where tea is brought you, unless you are young and beautiful enough to defy the ravages a railway journey makes in one's appearance, in which case you go downstairs to tea, usually served in the library or study or smoking-room. Tea is at hand from five to seven, and most of us go in for caviare, anchovy sandwiches, with an accompaniment of Kümmel, *deux doigts de Madère;* some, however, still cling to the beverage beloved of our grandmother—in public, that is to say. No Society woman can go on without a pick-me-up in private.

Belinda solemnly ate large pieces of rich cake, and strawberries and cream. The women did not take to my charge; Englishwomen have not the large-mindedness that characterises the Parisian. The men, however, as usual, crowded round her—Lord Farringdon deliberately absenting himself from Lady Molly, much to that little woman's rage.

Tea at Havilands is always served in the smaller library adjacent to the famous room which holds a priceless collection of volumes. The smaller library is filled with modern volumes, and is a gay room with beautiful pictures, and every variety of couch and of lounging chair. "Reading made easy," Belinda observed contemptuously, but there is little reading done either in it or in the big library. Nowadays we neither read literature nor write letters. The Society journal and the typewriter supply all our needs.

The big library is a charming room, panelled with inlaid woods; the bookcases are built into the wall, so that the books seem at home, not mere visitors or lodgers. Oriel windows look on to the grounds, stately with yew trees fashioned into wonderful shapes, under whose shade peacocks proudly strut, dragging their beautiful trains over the smooth-shaven grass.

Belinda fell in love with the house, and openly coveted it.

"There's no reason why you shouldn't have quite as beautiful a place," I said discreetly. "Farringdon has a most delightful castle in the next county, and Towchester's place, as you know, is almost as famous as Havilands."

"Do you mean that either of these gentlemen will *sell* their houses?" she asked ingenuously.

I was too annoyed to answer, save with a sneer. "My dear Belinda," I said sweetly, "your innocence is quite Arcadian. I am unequal to the task of enlightening you."

She gazed at me with clear and untroubled eyes, thanked me gravely—for what I don't know—and retired to dress.

Dinner at the Manor was at nine o'clock. It was then but little after seven, and I was glad of the rest and quiet; it gave me time to form my plans. Towchester and Farringdon were both very eligible. One had already showed symptoms of admiration for Belinda; the other, I made no doubt, would shortly follow suit. The question I had to consider was how to induce the girl to encourage their attentions, in the first place, and accept their offers—one or both—of marriage in the second. Hitherto all attempts to undermine her constancy to that absurd person David Carr had failed; reason told me all further attempts would fail also.

What then could be done?

With a flash of inspiration the solution of the problem came to me. Belinda was impregnable to flattery, threats, or bribes. David Carr, being a man, would prove far more susceptible. Somehow or other his affection for Belinda must be undermined. He must be engaged in an intrigue with another woman—a clever, unscrupulous woman, in whose hands he would be as clay. The fact that Carr was at that moment in Petersburg did not trouble me. He could, without doubt, obtain leave of absence if representations were made in the proper quarter, and that leave of absence I decided he should spend in England, if possible quite close to Havilands.

I sprang to my feet with a cry of triumph.

The Dean of Wilborough would gladly ask the young man to his house—the Dean and I were old friends—I had helped him to marry his sister—he would do much for me in a small way.

I hurriedly wrote a note to my old friend reminding him that the arches of his beloved Cathedral were suspected of unsound foundation, and hinting that a young friend of mine, a clever engineer, would shortly be in the neighbourhood, and would, if asked, gladly give an opinion as to their security.

The letter I knew would bring an invitation back post haste, which I decided to inclose to David with a cordial invitation.

So far so good; the campaign was well and carefully thought out, but there was one thing yet to be found—the woman. Had I been ten or even five years younger I might have attempted the *rôle* myself, but as things were it was impossible. Hurriedly I ran over the list of my acquaintances. Midge, too frivolous; Lady Saxby, too masculine; Molly Vansittart, too mercenary. None of them possessed the charm, the beauty requisite to displace Belinda in a man's heart.

Once more I thought of all my friends, even my enemies. Once more I had rejected all and each, when there came a knock at my door.

Digitized by Google

The next minute I was embracing—delicately, and with a due regard for the niceties of one's complexion, but quite cordially—the Princess Zouloff, the wonderful Russian beauty.

"My sweet Peggy—younger than ever, I declare. What an age since we met. I was delighted when I heard from Havilands that you were here. I came at once to see you."

The Princess smiled as she spoke, and walked with an indolent but perfect grace towards the fire, sinking into the most comfortable chair—*my* chair—the room boasted.

Vera, Princess of Zouloff, is one of the most beautiful women of the day. There is not a plain woman amongst the guests at Havilands Manor; some are even far beyond the average for good looks, and all have that *chic* which lends in itself a kind of beauty to the woman of the world. But the handsomest of them pales beside the wonderful bewitchery of the Russian lady, with her velvety white skin in such contrast to the splendour of her jewels, the rose red of her lips, and the darkness of her eyelashes and eyes.

And Belinda?

Well, she is always beautiful, but for once she had to yield the palm.

Vera's visit somewhat surprised me. We had always been quite civil to each other in Society, but beyond that our feelings had not gone. What then had been her motive for this visit, and for her protestations of regard?

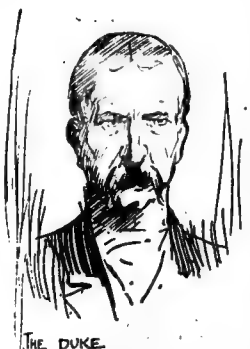
She quickly gave the explanation.

"You are looking well, dear Peggy," she said sweetly, "wonderfully well, considering all you have undergone. Imagine! To chaperon a little savage! What courage, what energy! Marvellous!"

"Not quite a savage, Vera, dearest. At any rate a very lovely and a very wealthy one. Paris went mad over her face and her millions. Eastacres, as you have heard, I suppose, is ready to die with vexation at her refusal. Paul de Sonnaz," I watched the Princess closely, "Baron Rolla, the Marquis de Belamont, all our friends, in fact, are in the same plight, and," I bent forward, "Alphonse Hervé is infatuated. He fought a duel on her behalf and was nearly killed. He——" I paused. Vera was looking at me scornfully, dangerously, from her dark, sombre eyes.

I had spoken the name of Alphonse with great deliberation and of intent. Alphonse had been the friend of the Russian beauty ever since they had met at a studio in Florence. She was a mere girl then, barely twenty, married to a man double her age and a brute. Alphonse had painted her portrait and won her heart. Society, of course, declared he was her lover, and for a time discriminating hostesses took care that where one was asked the other also should be invited. Some three years ago, however, there had come a change. The Princess had returned to her husband's estates in the north of Russia, and Alphonse, returning to Paris, immersed himself in art—until he met Belinda!

Why Vera and the handsome artist had parted I never knew! Gossip said he was tired of her violent temper and also herself, but if he had tired of his beautiful Princess, one thing was very certain. She still loved him; the more thought that another woman held her place in his heart roused all the fierce instincts of her nature—a nature which, outwardly cold as the snow fields of her country, was at heart hot and passionate.



THE DUKE OF EASTACRES

For a moment I gazed at the Princess, smiling quietly to myself. I had looked for a woman—a dangerous and fascinating woman—I had found her.

"Continue," she said with a laugh. "It affords me much amusement, my friend, to hear of Hervé's infatuation, as you call it, for a little school girl. And she—she loves him?"

I shook my head.

"Not a bit. She is obstinate as one of your own moujiks, and will not look at anyone, but a ridiculous young man named David Carr. A penniless person of neither birth nor fortune—a mere engineer."

"So!" The Princess lowered her white lids, a soft smile playing round her mouth. "Where is he, this estimable David?" she asked.

"At present in Petersburg, engaged on the bridge across the Neva. Soon"—I looked at her significantly—"he will be here in England. I fancy he will be staying with my friend the Dean of Wilborough."

She bent forward and kissed me, Russian fashion, on both cheeks.

"Clever Peggy," she said, with a mocking little smile, "adorable Peggy. What will you give me, my friend, if I remove this objectionable David Carr, this impossible, whom Belinda so adores?"

"Vera," I answered solemnly, "when you like you are the most sensible woman in the world. You will do as you like with the young man and I shall be eternally grateful."

I went to dinner in the best of spirits.

Vera was gorgeous in a wonderful combination of yellow and orange, with a necklace of big amber beads and a wonderful girdle of amber and gold. Belinda, more like a Greek nymph than ever, in a dress of white silk cut square, loosely hanging sleeves, sat near to her. Vera smiled sweetly at her girlish rival, and to my amusement, though not to my surprise, before the evening was over had completely won her heart. Belinda was ready to worship the beautiful woman who had smiled and talked so sweetly. As a rule, women did not smile or talk to Belinda.

On going to my room that night, I found one or two things to interest me. At a house like Havilands everything is done that can conduce to the comfort and happiness of the guests. Their rooms are full of little attentions for one's well-being, amongst which there is a printed paper which is laid on the dressing-table in every bedroom in the house; it contains the latest telegrams of public news, which come every afternoon and evening from a London news-agency.

Among the other items of interest that evening was the announcement of the illness of the Duchess of Eastacres. Her Grace was so seriously indisposed that her son, the Duke, had been sent for, also Lady Honoria. That, of course, meant that Eastacres would shortly arrive in town, and that sooner or later we should run across him. It was vexatious, very. His re-appearance might, very possibly would, prejudice Belinda against her other suitors.

For the present, however, there was nothing to be done. Eastacres would not, at any rate, turn up at Havilands Manor.

I received the dear Dean's answer to my letter in the course of the afternoon. He expressed himself delighted to entertain any friend of mine, especially an expert in regard to Cathedral arches! So far, so good. The next thing was to write to David and at the same time drop a line to a friend in a high place at Petersburg in regard to giving the young engineer a short leave of absence.

A letter from my faithful Crawley Drummond caused me to revise my plan of action. I decided that Crawley, in a spirit of middle-aged friendliness, should write to Carr, and tell him of the welcome awaiting him at Wilborough. It was far better that I should not appear on the scene. Crawley, with his usual good-nature, took the thing off my hands, and some four days after our arrival at the Manor he strolled in—Crawley knows everybody and goes everywhere—and announced that Carr was *en route* for England, Hampshire—and Belinda!

"I wired, don't you know," said Crawley. "Save time and trouble, I thought. And the young man wired his reply. And now, Peggy, if I might be permitted to ask—what is your game?"

For answer I motioned to where Princess Zouloff and Belinda were in close conversation with Farringdon and Towchester.

Digitized by Google

"I'm carrying the war into the enemy's country," I said. "I'm going to hand David over to the tender mercies of the Princess!"

Crawley twirled his moustache, fixed his glass firmly in his eye, and murmured:

"Happy David!"

It was quite clear that Farringdon and Towchester were hard hit by Belinda, for they openly and flagrantly neglected the ladies who claimed their service—Lady Molly and Mrs. Shilier Le Hay. Molly consoled herself with the Duke of Sulstone, a vacuous but wealthy young man with a penchant for ladies of the ballet. Mrs. Le Hay, however, did not so easily resign her Marquis. "Towzer" was the sobriquet his friends bestowed upon him, and "Towzer" had his work cut out to free himself from pretty Nancy's clutches. Scenes, tears, hysterics, were showered upon him—and us. But for once the Marquis was obdurate, and Mrs. Shilier Le Hay, unable to bear the mortification of his defection, finally departed.

"Very foolish woman," observed Crawley. "Why will women make scenes? Had she taken the thing quietly he would have been everlastingly grateful—and have settled her gaming debts up-to-date. As it is, she's made him loathe the sight of her. As for her bills"—Crawley shrugged his shoulders—"Le Hay can't pay them," he observed.

Belinda meantime was enjoying herself extremely. Farringdon, an excellent tennis and croquet player, spent his mornings in her company, passing delicious hours on the smooth, velvety lawns of the Manor gardens.

After dinner Towzer had his turn. He possessed a fine baritone voice, and by inducing Belinda to play his accompaniments—which she did indifferently well—secured her companionship for at least an hour every evening. And in an hour, as I think I have before remarked, much can be done—especially in a house like Havilands.

One night, after a moonlight stroll in the rose-walk, Belinda sought me out.

"Lady Peggy," she said a little hurriedly, "I want you to do me a favour; I want you to tell——" She paused, evidently at a loss how to proceed. "It is like this," she cried impetuously. "I can't help knowing that Hugh—Lord Farringdon, I mean," she hastily corrected herself, "likes me. I'm half afraid he likes me very much, and perhaps he may ask me to marry him. Somehow it doesn't seem fair to let him do that. I can't very well speak to him myself of David, but if you would tell him, it would save a lot of trouble."

"Tell him what?" I said coldly.

"That, that—— Oh, Lady Peggy," she said desperately, "tell him that David and I are going to get married."

"That," I said, "would be a deliberate untruth, unless you intend to set your father at defiance."

"I shall never marry anyone but David," she repeated.

"Upon my word, Belinda, you don't give the young man much option," I exclaimed. "David Carr is a good-looking and a clever fellow. Does it never strike you that it is rather hard lines on him to be bound—as you say he is bound—to you, a girl he never sees? You must understand," I continued, "that it would be a considerable sacrifice for him to marry you. You would go to him without a penny; you would be unable to help him in his profession, indeed you would retard him. Consider how many clever, wealthy women he is likely to meet, any one of whom he might easily make his wife!"

Belinda turned very white.

"I never thought of that," she murmured.

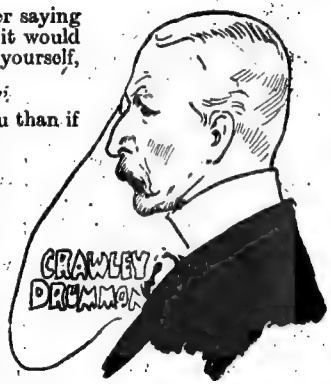
"Of course not," I answered satirically, "you were too pleasantly occupied with your admirers—none of whom, by-the-bye, would marry you without your fortune—except, perhaps, Lord Farringdon. David Carr is debarred from such pleasant companionship as you enjoy with the opposite sex. He is tied to you. You have bound him by a promise, which it will cost him dearly to keep."

"What ought I to do, Lady Peggy?" said the poor child, gazing at me with horror-stricken eyes.

"Write a nice little letter saying for the present you think it would be better that he, like yourself, should be free."

"But he will think——"

"Far more highly of you than if his freedom was curtailed," I interrupted. "The wider you open the door, the less a man wants to get out. Shut them up, and they'll break down the house to get free."



Belinda looked distressed, but evidently felt convinced of my wisdom. She brought me a note the next day couched in the terms I had suggested. I kissed her warmly, congratulated her on her strength of mind, and forwarded the letter to my dear friend, the Dean.

The first thing that David received on entering the hospitable walls of Wilborough was the aforesaid letter—written in ignorance of the fact that he was in England—within a few miles!

With masculine stupidity he put the worst possible interpretation on the missive, and imagined that Belinda had sent it to protect herself from the advances of a poor and undistinguished lover.

Smarting from fancied slight, his pride in arms, his ardour baffled, and his fond imaginings destroyed, David Carr went down to dinner at the Deanery in as moody a frame of mind as can well be imagined.

And at the dinner he found fate awaiting him—fate in the person of the most beautiful and sympathetic woman he had ever met.

Vera, the Russian Princess!

(The result of his new acquaintanceship will be told next Tuesday.)

TOM: "Didn't the encore unnerve Miss Twitter?" Jess: "Not a bit; she's used to having the neighbours hammer on the wall when she sings."

"PAPA, I know what I'm going to buy for your next birthday." "Well, what?" "A nice painted shaving mug." "But I've got a good one now." "Oh, I've just broken that."

LITTLE CHARLIE (age ten): "You have insulted my cousin Emmie." Little Bobby (age nine): "I'm ready to give you satisfaction." Little Charley: "Then give me half of your apple."

"MY dear Baron, what are you doing? Smoking two cigars at one and the same time?" "Well, you see, my dear fellow, in this beastly hole you can't get sixpenny cigars, such as I am in the habit of smoking, so I have to make shift with a couple of threepenny ones."

Result of the "Face" Competition.

THE Gramophone prizes have been awarded as follows:

H. Lay, "Cader Idris," Dynevor Road, Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells.
E. Barnes, 68 Lydford, Paddington, W.
H. Smith, 50 Devonshire Street, Keighley.
Miss Ethel Hornsby, c.o. Mrs. Prosser, 67 Belgrave Road, Walthamstow.
J. Baker, 10 Broughton Street, Darwen.
W. H. Walter, 1 Danbury Street, St. Peter's Street, Islington, N.
E. A. Hancock, 5 Vernon Place, Birkenhead.
W. Cleaver, 15 Station Road, Port Talbot, South Wales.
Master W. Burnham, New Row, Thurlston, nr. Penistone.
R. L. Edwards, Sea View, St. Leonard's Avenue, Hove.

Digitized by Google

TWO GIRLS AND A SCARF-PIN.

The Story of a Boy and Girl Courtship with the Usual Ending.

"Oh, Connie, you *must* come to us for Christmas. You surely can't refuse *me*." And little Lady Towers clasped her hands, and looked imploringly at her old friend and playmate.

"I have no heart for gaiety, and no suitable dress," replied Constance Carlisle, rather curtly.

"But, dear, there will be no gaiety. Roland's mother is so recently dead that gaiety is out of the question. There will be the pater and all the boys. You would like to see the boys again, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, I should like to meet your brothers again," admitted Constance. "And if there really will be no other guests——"

"Well, Mabel Huntley invited herself, and I couldn't refuse her. The boys will be furious."

"We all disliked her as children," remarked Constance. "The boys always called her a coward and a sneak. I didn't like her any better when she grew up. I saw a great deal of her two years ago, just before—before—you know, Flossie."

Flossie nodded. She knew Constance referred to her father's death, just after the loss of his entire fortune. The two years which had passed since then had exactly reversed the positions of the two friends. Flossie, the doctor's penniless daughter, and general servant to her seven brothers, was now the petted wife of the wealthy Sir Roland Towers, and the mother of his heir. Constance, the idolised only child and heiress of a merchant prince, now earned her bread as typist in a merchant's office.

"What a lovely girl Miss Carlisle is!" remarked Sir Roland Towers to a large, handsome blonde, as they stood looking over some views together.

"Do you think so?" she drawled. "She has no colour, you know. Do you admire that dead-white skin, Mr. Leigh?"

The young man was staring intently at the group round the fire, Constance in a plain black evening dress, with white roses at her breast.

"She always looks to me like a pure white rose," he said, dreamily, and Mabel tossed her head, an angry light in her blue eyes.

The evening passed like a happy dream to Constance. All was so different from her lonely evenings in her dreary lodgings. Flossie went with her to her room when bed-time came.

"It is lovely to have you, darling," she exclaimed. "But how serious you look. Has Mabel been disagreeable?"

"Flossie," said Constance, abruptly, "why did you not tell me that Vincent Leigh was to be here?"

"Because I didn't know," was the prompt reply. "Roland asked him this morning. But why should you mind? You were always such friends. Do you——?" Flossie stopped, for her friend was weeping bitterly.

"Oh, let me cry," she gasped, as Flossie overwhelmed her with caresses and questions, "let me cry, or my heart will break."

Flossie stood helplessly by while Constance sobbed and moaned, as if indeed her heart were broken. At last the girl raised her head from the couch, where she had flung herself in her outburst of grief.

"I will tell you about it, Flossie," she whispered. "Only do not look at me. I feel so deadly, *deadly* ashamed of myself."

"I am quite sure there is nothing to be ashamed about," said Flossie, briskly. "Have your quarrelled with Vincent? You were so cold to him to-night. Two years ago, I thought——"

Constance checked her by a gesture.

"So did I," she said, in a choked voice, "and that is just what is torturing me. I—I had hoped never to see Vincent Leigh again."

"But he adored you as a child," cried Flossie.

"As a child, yes. And that was what misled me. He petted and played with me, and I worshipped him. When I was twelve and he seventeen I gave him a scarf-pin as a Christmas gift. I had it made to my own design. He used to call me his little white rose-bud, and I had a silver pin made, a rose-bud with a tiny pearl set in it forming the head. The words 'I love you' were engraved on it. We quarrelled on Christmas Day, and I snatched the pin out of his tie, crying, 'I do not love you now, and you shall not have it back till I love you again.' Next day he was called away by his father's sudden death, and we did not meet again till seven years later, when he came to spend Christmas with us."

"I remember," nodded Flossie.

"Mabel Huntley was with us too, and I saw he admired her, but I thought—oh, fool that I was!—that he really loved *me*, and was trying to make me jealous. On Christmas Eve we were to have a dance——"

"Yes, it was there Roland proposed," Flossie interrupted.

"I know. That morning Vincent and I were alone in the conservatory, and he seemed so kind and loving to me. We were talking over old childish days, and he reminded me of the scarf-pin. He laughed at me for a little vixen, and then he added, so tenderly—at least, there seemed to me a world of love and wistful tenderness in his voice and eyes—'Constance, may I not have the pin again?' I was too agitated to speak, and he went on to remind me that I used always to give him a button-hole to wear every evening when he used to stay with us long ago, and to ask me to do so again. Then he said again, 'May I not have the pin again? You know you promised——' Just then Mabel Huntley interrupted us, but I thought—oh, fool, *fool* that I was," and Connie's slender body writhed with shame—"I thought he was serious, and Flossie, Flossie, I did give him the pin."

"Well?" cried Flossie, eagerly.

"I made him a button-hole of a white rose and spray of maidenhair fern, stuck the pin through it, slipped into his dressing room, and put it on his table. When we went into the ball-room Mabel wore it."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Flossie.

"She did," Constance went on, tears streaming down her cheeks. "I asked her where she got the pin, and she said from Vincent. She said he laughed very much over it, and said a little simpleton had fallen in love with him, and given him that as a love-token, so he passed it on to her."

"But I don't understand——" began Flossie.

"Oh, it's plain enough. He had not meant anything, and was quite scared when he saw I took it seriously. He knew if he gave Mabel the pin, I should understand. Fancy accepting the man before he asked me." And Constance laughed feebly.

"I believe there is something under this," remarked Flossie. "That was a caddish thing to do, and not like Vincent. He does not even like Mabel, though she is always running after him. And one thing I noticed to-night, she never allowed him to speak to you unless she was at your elbow. She seemed afraid of what you might tell him."

Digitized by Google

If Lady Towers noticed Mabel's efforts to keep the one-time lovers apart that evening, she observed them even more clearly next day. It was Christmas Eve, and real Christmas weather. All day the snow had been falling, and the cold was piercing. No one could go out. Mabel had perseveringly stuck to Constance all day. Even when their hostess asked Vincent to show Constance the priest's room, as the secret chamber was called, Mabel instantly begged leave to accompany them, although she was a notorious coward, and had declined to go with the others on a previous visit, on the ground that she "hated dark and uncanny places." For the priest's room was said to be haunted. So Lady Towers decided to make the fourth. The secret-room was in the picture gallery, and Vincent held back the heavy sliding panel, while the ladies stepped daintily within, holding their skirts from the dust and cobwebs. They had hardly made two steps forward when Mabel, with a loud scream of "The monk! The monk's ghost!" fell heavily to the ground.

Vincent rushed to her help, and the panel sliding to, they were imprisoned in the darkness. Mabel's screams grew frantic.

"Don't be silly," said Flossie, disgusted. "Roland and the boys know where we are, and when we don't turn up in a reasonable time they'll soon look us up."

"Not in time to save my life!" moaned Mabel. "I've cut my head open, falling, and I'm bleeding to death."

"It does seem a bad cut," said Vincent, in an alarmed tone. "I can feel the blood soaking my coat as I hold her."

"I'm dying, I know I am," gasped Mabel. "The ghost of the monk came to warn me. I can't die without confessing. Constance, Vincent didn't give me the scarf-pin you gave him. I heard what he said to you that day in the conservatory, and I saw you put the button-hole on his table. I took it, and I told him you gave it to me because you wanted the man who gave it to you to understand you didn't care for him. And I told you he gave it to me. I thought he would turn to me and grow to love me, but he didn't, and I'm bleeding to death, and I can't die with a guilty conscience. And oh, the monk! the monk!"

Here Mabel went off into a series of piercing yells, which relieved her hearers' fears as to the danger of her dying from exhaustion, and speedily procured their release.

Mabel was led off by her hostess to have her wound, which turned out to be a mere flesh cut, attended to, and Vincent turned to Constance, and took both her hands in his.

"Is that true, Connie? Did you mean to give me back my pin?"

The dark, soulful eyes met his steadfastly.

"I did, and when I thought you despised me, and had given it to Mabel, it nearly broke my heart."

"And she told me you had laughed at me, and loved another fellow. My darling, when you were a child, you said, 'I will give you the pin back when I love you again.' If you had it still, would you give it me now?"

The love-light shone in the beautiful eyes still raised to his, and the sweet, tremulous voice thrilled him with rapture as she answered:

"I gave it you back two years ago, Vincent. I would give it to you again now. For I love you, dear."

And as he clasped her to his breast, he could only murmur in his deep joy, "My little white rosebud."

Vera Serkoff.

£50 FROM ONE READER TO THE REST.

A reader of SHORT STORIES won a prize of £10 in 1894, and with the help of this money emigrated to America, making a fortune out of the cycle boom of 1897 and 1898. He recently wrote a letter, under the *nom-de-plume* of "Dayton," to the Editor of SHORT STORIES, inclosing dollar bills to the value of £50, and asking that this money may be offered as prizes in five sums of £10 each.

The Editor has given the matter very careful consideration, and has arrived at the conclusion that, as his anonymous correspondent was in great want when he won his prize, the most satisfactory manner of distributing his gifts of £50 would be to offer them to those who can give the best reasons for receiving them.

You may be wanting to emigrate to one of our Colonies. You may want £10 to buy something you have needed for a long time. You may want to clear off some small debts that have been worrying you. Or you may want to trade with the £10 and, like "Dayton," turn it into a fortune.

Whatever your reason for wanting it may be, write it down in the space below, and send it to "The Competition Editor of SHORT STORIES," Henrietta Street, London, W.C., in an envelope marked "Dayton 5," so as to arrive not later than Tuesday, January 27th.

Readers may send as many reasons as they like, provided each is written on a separate coupon. The Editor's decision is final, and competitors may enter only on this understanding.

→ **CUT OFF THE COUPON HERE.** ←

FINAL COUPON.

My reason for wanting £10 is.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Name..... **Address**.....

Digitized by Google

A Woman of a Thousand.

A Fateful Episode in the Lives of Two Very Clever People.

"That's all I know about it, sir. There's the 'call' hanging up behind you."

"But I can't make it out, Summers! The new piece going so strong, money being turned away, and now, without a word of warning, and for no earthly reason, that I can see—Shakespeare! It's beyond me! Anyone on the stage?"

"Miss O'Brien, sir!"

Summers, the veteran, and, therefore, privileged stage-door-keeper, smiled ever so slightly as he spoke the lady's name.

Hartley Reeve didn't notice it, for he had turned on his heel in order to read the managerial notice once again before going through on to the stage.

"Strikes me," said Summers to himself musingly, as he watched the tall, erect figure disappear through the swing doors, "as there's going to be trouble over this bit of business. To take off *My Lady Violet*, as is paying hand over fist, and put on *Hamlet* in scratch style, as, perhaps, will only run a fortnight, ain't common sense in the guv'nor, as worships the shekels almost, and if Miss Molly O'Brien ain't at the bottom of it, I'll eat my hat!"

Meanwhile Hartley Reeve had reached the semi-dark stage. The T-piece had not yet been lighted, and he could for the moment see nobody. Then, from under an old Elizabethan archway—part of the first "set" in *My Lady Violet*—he saw approaching him a vision in silvery grey and furs.

"I know what you are going to say," she said, holding out both her hands, which he took eagerly, and dropped reluctantly, "and all about it. Fancy Willoughby North as Hamlet!—for he has cast himself for the Royal Dane, and you for Laertes—why, I would engage to find a better prince among the panto. supers at the Lane!"

"It isn't so much that, Molly; it is what is he doing it for?" replied the actor. "As sure as his name's North, he will have to close the theatre within three weeks. But never mind 'shop,' dear, have you thought about what I said to you yesterday?"

"Thought about it?—Yes."

"Well, dear—well?"

"I have done more, I have come to a conclusion, and——"

"Yes, darling!"

She saw that upon the next words that she should speak depended the life-happiness of this man, and, as she loved him, as such a woman could love such a man, she would not delay that happiness for so much even as a moment of time.

"Just let it be as you wish," she said, without a trace of that affectation, which is seen far oftener off the stage than upon it.

"Molly! My own Molly, now!" he whispered. "That for Willoughby North and all his works—snapping his fingers excitedly—we——"

"Sh!" interrupted Molly, pressing his arm warningly.

"Hullo, Reeve, you're betimes!" said a loud, grating voice behind the young actor. "But I see how it is, it is a case of killing two birds with one shot, eh?"

The speaker was a man of average height, but of a cast of countenance repellent in its downright ugliness. Even this might have been pardoned him, as, naturally he couldn't help it, but the evil expression of his eyes, the ever-present sneer, the overbearing hectoring manner, were things that had come by self-cultivation, and witnessed the nature of the man.

Hartley Reeve, though a leading member of his company, had a righteous contempt — amounting almost to hatred — for manager Willoughby North, which that gentleman was not slow to detect, and to appreciate—resentfully. The latter had seen, too, the evident attachment existing between Molly O'Brien and his leading man, and, for reasons of his own, had determined upon a policy, having for its object the professional ruin of Hartley Reeve.

In his own way, also, North himself was in love with Molly O'Brien, and thus had two items—each strong enough to influence the spirit that was in him—upon which to found a scheme for satisfaction and revenge.

Very curiously Reeve had failed altogether to notice the other's admiration for Molly, never imagining for a moment that there was any danger in that direction. The faintest suspicion of such a thing would not only have precipitated his own declaration, but would have led him to seek another engagement for both himself and the girl of his heart.

It was Willoughby North's remark on this particular morning that first opened Hartley Reeve's eyes and put him on his guard.

"Here early?" he said quietly, in reply to the manager's double-edged gibe. "Your wire first thing this morning startled me so that I couldn't sleep afterwards."

"Well—er—as a matter of fact, I began to have my doubts of a run for *My Lady Violet*, and, as one or two of the other West-end houses are doing well with Shakespeare, I didn't see why I shouldn't share in the boom."

Both his listeners knew that this was a lie, but were as far as ever from the reading of the riddle.

"I shall expect you to understudy my Hamlet," North went on, "though I don't think that you will have the opportunity of playing the part. As for you, my dear, Ophelia will be just the chance for you."

"I don't know," said Molly. "Ophelia is not a favourite part of mine. Why don't you put *The Merchant* up, Mr. North, I have always wanted to play Portia in London."

"Sorry, I'm sure, but the announcements are out, and—and *Hamlet* suits me."

Had Hartley Reeve known that this especial play had been deliberately selected for a dastardly and even criminal purpose, he would then and there have come to an issue with the coward who had schemed and planned for a man's undoing, and a woman's sorrow. But he did not; he certainly suspected North of some underhand juggling, but of what sort or seriousness he was as yet unable to determine.

For years the manager of the "Queen's" had posed as a bachelor, no man denying him, so that had he openly wooed the clever little lady who headed his company, not a soul would have thought of gainsaying his right to do so.

But he was a man with a reputation for secret methods, and was, therefore, a person to be suspected upon very short notice.

Right through the rehearsal, which lasted, with intervals, all day, up to curtain-rise almost, Willoughby North paid more than usual attention to Molly O'Brien, though Hartley Reeve's faith in his promised wife was such that it didn't trouble him to any great extent.

Ophelia's presence not being required after the fourth act, Molly whispering *au revoir* to her lover, slipped quietly from

Digitized by Google

the stage. Passing through the swing doors into the outer passage, she both saw and heard Summers the doorkeeper, and a shabbily-dressed woman in high argument.

"You must see Mr. North? Well, you can't and won't see him, for he's busy!"

"Let me go through to him; that's all I want!"

"I daresay you do. But you don't if I know it. What's your name?"

"Never mind my name; I——"

"Haven't got one, perhaps. Leastways one you can give without being ashamed of it."

"Who is it? What is it?" said a sweet voice at the open door of the little glass office.

"That's just what I don't know, miss," replied the old commissionaire, flushed with angry irritation. "She wants to see Mr. North, and she won't tell her name or her business."

Something in the white, pinched face of the woman appealed to Molly's tenderness of heart and sympathy.

"Can I do anything for you?" she asked. "Shall I speak to Mr. North for you?"

"No, no! Not you! Not you! And yet I must see him or I shall starve—and die!"

"Well, come with me! I am going to a hotel close by here to dinner, and you shall have some with me; I am all alone, and you will be company for me. Then, too, you will, perhaps, be able to say how I can further serve you."

"Is your name O'Brien—Molly O'Brien?" queried the woman with sudden insistence.

"Yes, that is my name."

"I have heard that you were beautiful, and clever, and good, and the last I would not believe. But I do believe it now, and—and I will go with you."

"Excuse me, miss," said Summers in a low voice behind his hand, "but you'd better be careful!"

"That's all right, Summers, I can look after myself, and the poor creature doesn't look so very formidable. Whistle for a hansom for me!"

In two minutes Molly followed her guest into the cab, and was driven rapidly to a certain old-fashioned hotel in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, where she was well known.

Acting upon Molly's tip-supported instructions before she left the theatre with the stranger, Summers did not acquaint the manager with the fact of what had taken place. Molly could not exactly have given a reason for this shutting of the doorkeeper's mouth, she merely wished to first hear the woman's story, so that she could, if necessary, and possible, help forward her object.

Thus it happened that the whole fortnight during which the *Hamlet* rehearsals lasted, North's attention to the beautiful actress grew in fervour and intensity, so much so, indeed, that Hartley Reeve was more than once on the point of forcible expostulation. Noticing this, Molly took the first opportunity of speaking to him on the subject.

"But I can't bear to see the brute talking to you in this style," said Hartley. "The next thing will be his asking you to marry him!"

"Well, I hope he will!"

"You hope he will," he gasped. "Why, Molly, you must be mad!"

"Not even a little bit, dear. If you will only do as I ask you, to hear, see, and say nothing, as well as to trust me, you will find by-and-bye that the end justifies the means."

"It's very hard, Molly, and I don't think you ought to push me so close, and if I didn't know that you were a woman of a thousand, I wouldn't consent to it."

"There's a dear boy!" she replied, smiling bewitchingly up into his face. "It will soon be over for you, to-morrow night—Hamlet's first night—will end it all, so far as you and I are concerned—while I just want you to remember one thing, and that is, that guile must sometimes be met with guile, if it is to be successfully checkmated."

"Well, thank goodness, it hasn't to last much longer, for I verily believe that much more of it would make me want to kill somebody—Willoughby North, by preference."

"Silly boy, have patience! Good-night."

As for the shabbily-dressed woman, she came no more to the stage-door of the "Queen's" to inquire for its manager.

* * * * *

The revival of *Hamlet* at the Queen's Theatre, will long be remembered by those interested in matters theatrical, by reason of the strange events attending the first performance of the play, which was also destined to be the last.

So far as the male characters were concerned, interest seemed to be centred in the Laertes, Hamlet's ranting and mouthing, at the hands of Willoughby North, being received with severe silence, and the derisive booing of the "gods."

This was more marked before Ophelia's entrance in the second act, Molly O'Brien being the darling of everybody, from galleryite to stall-holder.

In one of the stage-boxes a lady, attended by a young gentleman of particularly youthful appearance, sat, so hidden by the amber satin curtain, that her face was only indistinctly visible. Each time that Ophelia was upon the stage, it might have been noticed that the lady bent more forward, and never took her eyes off the actress till the latter made her exit.

When, in act four, Ophelia enters mad, with her basket of flowers, for distribution, she cast a quick glance up at the box in question, and placed, for just a second, two fingers upon her lips. It appeared to be some pre-arranged signal, for the lady immediately answered it by a similar placing of two fingers upon her lips. Then she leant back again in the shadow of the curtain, and, for the rest of the evening,

"Hullo, Reeve, you're betimes. Killing two birds with one shot, eh?"

Digitized by Google

up to the final duel between Hamlet and Laertes, gave no sign of interest in the proceedings.

* * * * *

Molly O'Brien, looking lovely in her robe of creamy white, and not in any wise disfigured by the tangle of weeds and wild flowers in her hair, stood at the wing on the *O. P.* side, waiting her cue.

For the moment there was nobody in the immediate neighbourhood of where she was, the stage hands, with the players who were not required, being assembled in the two first entrances to watch Molly O'Brien's great scene.

"I want an answer to a question I am going to ask you," suddenly said a voice at her side.

It was Hamlet.

"Mr. North," replied Molly, involuntarily shrinking away from him, "this is a strange time in which to ask questions."

"Yes, I know, but the five minutes you yet have are ample in which to do as I ask you."

She saw by his excited manner that the thing which she had been expecting was now to be, and nerved herself for the inevitable.

"Do you know that I love you—that I have determined in my own mind that, here and now, you shall make of me a happy man or a fiend?"

"Mr. North, you forget yourself!"

"I do not. Your answer, will you be my wife?"

"I have no answer for that question."

"By Heaven, you shall have!"

"I said you had forgotten yourself; it seems I spoke the truth."

"Will you be my wife?"

"No!"

"You love Hartley Reeve?"

"I do!"

"You shall never marry him!"

"I do not heed your threats, sir!"

"Why will you not marry me? I have fifty times as much money as your beggarly sweetheart!"

"Perhaps. You ask why I will not marry you; before curtain-fall I will tell you. Pardon me, there is my cue."

Then, walking out on to the stage, her flower-basket in her hand, she spoke in plaintive questioning, "Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?"

Upon leaving the stage after the mad scene, a note was handed to Molly by her dresser. It was in pencil, and ran:

"I have seen your signal. Send round for me to your room a few minutes before the end. I will bring your brother with me. I saw Willoughby North's eyes as they followed you on to the stage. He means mischief, either to you or to Laertes. Be warned and watch."

After Ophelia's death it was with but scant patience that the audience sat out the rest of the play.

Then was reached the last scene of all.

The rapiers were handed to Hamlet and Laertes by Osric, the former suddenly reaching forward his hand and snatching one.

With a deep groan Hartley Reeve sank down.

"Another hit! What say you?" cries Hamlet, lunging heavily.

Then all was confusion. With a deep groan Hartley Reeve sank down, blood welling out of a wound in his shoulder, Hamlet's sword having passed completely through, and been withdrawn.

At the same moment two ladies, one in walking costume, the other in evening dress, hurried on to the stage, the latter stooping rapidly and picking up the rapier which, by the jerk of the withdrawal, had fallen out of Hamlet's hand.

The uproar and consternation in the front of the house was such as has never been seen in a London theatre before or since. Ladies shrieked, people called "Murder" and "Police!" while some adventurous pittites made their way over stalls and orchestra on to the stage. No one behind seemed to know what to do, even to the extent of lowering the curtain.

Meanwhile, Molly O'Brien on her knees upon the ground, supported the unconscious form of her lover, his head upon her lap. Medical aid was at once summoned.

When at last a doctor having arrived, the unfortunate man was removed to Charing Cross Hospital, Molly accompanied him there in the cab.

Someone sent for the police, but when they arrived it was to find the bird flown. Mr. Willoughby North, murderer and bigamist in intent, had fled during the confusion.

One glance at the lady in evening-dress—now Molly O'Brien's companion—was sufficient; while the incriminating weapon in her hand—*the button removed*—gave promise of what he must expect if he remained.

He was never caught; for a man with money can flee and hide, where a poor man will certainly fall a sure prey to the law.

Hilda Willoughby, the wife whom he had cruelly treated, and deserted, told Molly how for eight years she had lived a life of want and misery, and that accidentally finding out her husband, under his assumed name of North, she had endeavoured, in sheer desperation, to see him, for the purpose of getting the means of subsistence from him.

There was something about her which attracted the generous heart of Molly, and from the day that the latter took her to that Covent Garden Hotel, and put new life and spirit into her with the food which she sat before her, she had never loosed hold of her.

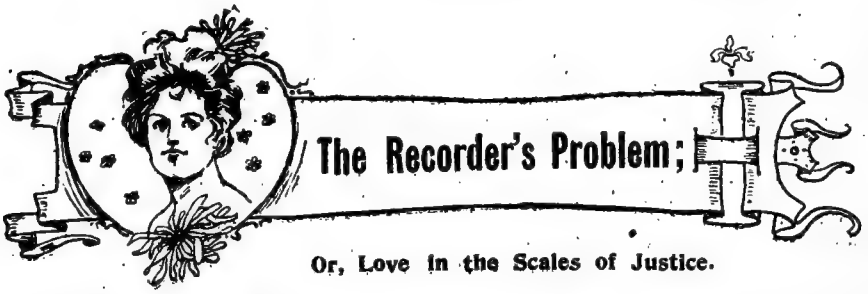
They seemed to take to each other at once. Molly was always of a sympathetic nature, and Mrs. Willoughby's sufferings, caused by the way in which she had been treated by her scoundrel of a husband, struck a tender chord in her heart.

Hartley Reeve, now that he has recovered from the wound, which with surer aim might have cost him his life, fully indorses his wife's action in the matter, and Hilda Willoughby is sure of a home with the great actor and actress, for the rest of her days.

"My dear!" she will sometimes say confidentially to a friend, "if there is one thing more than another upon which Mr. Reeve and I are agreed, it is, that his Molly is for us "a woman of a thousand."

Arthur Gunter.

Digitized by Google



The Recorder's Problem;

Or, Love in the Scales of Justice.

Sir Henry Bristowe stepped into the cab which had drawn up outside the Sessions House and was driven away to his residential flat a little way out of town. The onlookers said that he appeared to be deep in thought, and that they were not surprised thereby, for the case which he was trying was a very serious one, and the evidence required careful consideration and discrimination on the part of the judge.

Some of the older people told the younger ones that they had known Bristowe as a young man; they related how he had gone up to London to study law, and they briefly traced his brilliant career at the Bar as a barrister on the Northern Circuit, and concluded with the remark: "And then he was made Recorder of this city, his own birth-place, where his father built up a big business, which is still carried on by his brother; and then he was knighted."

A man was being tried for his life, arraigned on the charge of having murdered his partner. The case should have been tried by a judge from London, but he had fallen ill in the middle of his round, the influenza had stricken three other judges of the High Court, and, consequently, the Lord Chancellor had been compelled to make provision for the uninterrupted running of legal business and Sir Henry Bristowe, as Recorder, found heavier responsibilities laid upon him.

There were many who envied Bristowe, for he had risen rapidly, and was now but little over forty. There were a few unkind and ignorant critics who said that he was not old enough to be a man of experience, but his ability was not doubted by the majority. Bristowe was unmarried, a fact that procured him many invitations to social gatherings and private parties.

Dismissing the cab with an extra gratuity to the driver, Sir Henry Bristowe slowly passed along the wide hall of the building and up the first flight of stone steps to his own flat, letting himself in and pressing an electric button inside the door to let his housekeeper know that he had returned. He went straight to his study and threw himself into a chair near the window. He gazed through the glass into the road, but he saw nothing of it, for his thoughts were far away.

"Alfred Pearse is doomed unless his counsel can shake the evidence of Basil Hurst to-morrow," murmured the Recorder. "The evidence against Pearse is circumstantial, but Hurst's testimony is clear, and it will be convincing unless Douglas can shake it. That will require all Douglas' skill, though! It is amazing to think that Hurst withstood all the ability of one of the cleverest counsel in the country. I think that Douglas himself was nettled!"

A knock at the door interrupted the reverie. In response to his "Come in," the door was opened by his housekeeper, an elderly woman, who had been nursemaid in his father's household and had remained with one or other member of the family all her life. Should she bring in his tea?

"Yes, Mrs. Oakley," he answered absently. "Yes, bring it in here. Oh, and let me have the evening paper as soon as it arrives," he added, rousing for a moment.

The housekeeper, as he termed her, although his "house" was a flat, departed and Bristowe resumed his train of thought.

"She was in Court and I watched her all the time. Does she still hold the same opinion as when she wrote that note?"

He rose from his chair and went to a writing-table; unlocking one drawer, he took from it a small packet of papers and letters, and one of the latter was selected by him. Another rap at his door caused him to thrust the packet into the drawer hurriedly, and he waited till Mrs. Oakley had deposited the tray on the table and left the room. Then he drew the packet out again and opened the selected letter.

"I am sorry that it cannot be. I cannot accept your offer, because my heart would not go with my hand; it is given to another. Let us not be estranged by this, but when we meet, as meet we must, let us press each other's hand in friendship and be really friends."

"Friends!" he repeated. "Friends! It is always the same when a woman rejects you. I love that woman as a man loves only once in a lifetime; how is it possible for me to regard her as merely a friend and see her as the wife of another?"

Replacing the letter in the packet and the packet in the drawer, he turned mechanically to his tea.

"Given to another." And this other man was Alfred Pearse whom he, Bristowe, was trying on the capital charge! If Pearse were proved guilty, then Edith Northcote—— Sir Henry Bristowe lowered the cup from which he was about to drink and sat rigid as the haunting thought overpowered him once more. Yes, if Pearse suffered the extreme penalty, the Recorder's rival in love would be removed!

"And he will suffer unless some strong influence is brought to bear on the jury, some strong moral suasion." Sir Henry uttered the thought almost aloud, and he started and shivered as the sound of his own voice struck his ear.

He tried the expedient of reading the newspaper, which had been laid on the table with the tea, but he could not keep his thoughts from the trial, Edith Northcote and Alfred Pearse. In the present state of the case, the Recorder would have scarcely any difficulty in so completely convincing the jury of Pearse's guilt that the removal of his rival was certain. And then he might hope to approach Edith!

He knew not how long he sat there, but he started from his chair, stiff through having sat for a long time in one position, as he saw a woman's form before him.

"Edith!" The name came involuntarily from his lips.

Edith Northcote was a woman of commanding presence, strikingly beautiful, with that beauty which is partly made up of queenly dignity. As she stood in front of her rejected lover, the dignity of the face was slightly relaxed and an expression of intreaty was upon it.

"Why are you here? Pray be seated!" said the Recorder, motioning her to a chair with a dignified gesture. He had recovered from his surprise and had assumed his wonted bearing.

Edith Northcote sank into the chair, but rose immediately.

"I have come to ask for your assistance," she said, in a low voice of mingled intreaty and anxiety, slightly stretching out her hands as she spoke. "You are his judge, and you said that you loved me; I love him, and I ask you to save him that I may be happy!"

"I do not understand you," he returned gravely. "As the judge, I have my duty to perform, and I shall perform it impartially. *I* cannot save him! It is the jury with whom the decision rests, and they will decide in accordance with the evidence."

"The jurymen will decide in accordance with the moral influence brought to bear upon them," returned the visitor significantly, passionately, clasping her hands nervously. "The counsel for the prosecution will use all his influence to persuade them that the accused is guilty; the counsel for the defence will exert his powers to prove that the accused is innocent; but the jurymen will listen to and be chiefly influenced by the judge! Everyone is saying that the issue

Digitized by Google

of the trial depends entirely upon you, for the evidence is circumstantial. You are one of themselves, one of their own townsmen; they honour and admire you, and they will go by what you say!"

"And I shall say that which is right according to the evidence!" declared Bristowe, his face very pale, and his hands trembling slightly. "You should not come to me—to me, the judge!—to tempt me to be false to my trust! You must go at once; I cannot listen!"

He moved towards the door to show her out, but she only turned in order to face him, and did not move one step nearer the exit.

"The evidence is against him, but he is innocent!" she cried wildly. "My heart would turn instinctively from him if he were guilty. It all rests with you in your summing up, to deliver him to the gallows or—or to me! They will decide as you suggest, and there is enough difference in the evidence for you to suggest——"

"Madam, I must ask you to retire!" said the Recorder sternly, although his whole frame was quivering with the torture which her words inflicted upon him. "If anyone saw you enter here, my reputation as an impartial and incorruptible dispenser of justice would be gone!"

He opened the door and walked to the outer door, followed by Edith Northcote. He saw how it was that she had been able to gain access to him without being announced; Mrs. Oakley had slipped out and left the outer door ajar. She did that occasionally when she found that she had not got the key handy in her pocket, and she intended to be absent only a short time. It was a bad habit which he had rebuked several times, but it is hard not to be indulgent to an old servant.

Several persons noticed that there was a light in one of the rooms of Sir Henry Bristowe's flat very late at night, but they paid no heed to the fact. Only one person, a servant in a house on the opposite side of the road, spoke to Mrs. Oakley about it; she was friendly with the elderly dame, and on the following morning she mentioned it.

"Sir Henry must have been very worried about that case, Mrs. Oakley," she said confidentially. "I was up most of the night with the toothache, and I saw a light in his private room nearly all night. And he was walking up and down the room, too, for I saw his shadow on the blind every now and then—regular-like, just as it would be when he got to the window-end of the room and got between the light and the blind somehow, you know."

Mrs. Oakley looked concerned, and said that she hoped he was not ill, and dismissed the subject.

The trial was resumed at ten o'clock, and Douglas, the eminent counsel, took up his cross-examination of the Treasury witness, Hurst, but failed to shake his evidence. There were some witnesses for the defence, but, when the prosecuting counsel began his concluding speech it was commonly thought that the accused was doomed if the judge's summing-up was in the least degree against the prisoner. Douglas' concluding speech was a masterly one; he had never surpassed the level attained on that occasion, and he contrived to throw enough doubt into the case to cause everyone to look to the Recorder. How had he viewed the evidence?

Sir Henry Bristowe placed his notes in order and prepared to sum up. His face was white and haggard, and this impressed the spectators with the feeling that he was acting with the highest sense of the duties of his office, and that the case had caused him the greatest anxiety.

The Recorder sent another glance round the crowded Court in search of Edith Northcote. She had not been present during the day's proceedings so far, but he fancied that she might appear to hear the summing-up. She was not there, and he concluded that she thought the case hopeless after his reception of her appeal last night, and that she could not endure to witness the last scene in the Court, and see and hear her lover sentenced to an ignominious death by his rival.

Sir Henry Bristowe began his speech, speaking slowly, and with an effort; the people crowded together in Court listened with feverish anxiety and the prisoner watched the judge with strained eyes. By degrees the Recorder's voice grew stronger and his tones firmer till they rang through the building. He dissected the evidence in the most skilful manner, while Douglas, Hurst, and the accused listened in wonderment.

"It's a defence of the prisoner!" thought Douglas. "A masterly defence; better than I could possibly have made, for it is done by an impartial person, and is—seemingly—so impartial! It carries conviction with it! If he keeps on like that, my man is safe!"

"If people take that seriously," muttered Hurst, "I may expect to be had up on a charge of perjury!"

The speech was finished just before six o'clock, the Court having arranged to sit till the case was terminated. There was a buzz of excitement as the Recorder ceased speaking: many thought that the verdict would be given without the jury leaving the box, and, as a matter of fact, it was as a mere form than otherwise that the jury retired. The interval afforded a breathing time and a relief from the tension of the day's experience. The prisoner was removed, the Recorder left the Court, and the public passed the time in energetic chatter. The jury returned in twenty minutes, the prisoner was brought back, and the Recorder resumed his seat. The usual formal questions were asked by the clerk, and the jury returned a verdict of "Not guilty."

"The Scottish verdict of 'Not proven' would have been more appropriate from my point of view," said a solicitor to a friend as he left the Court. "I myself would hardly like to say that the accused was innocent, but the Recorder seemed convinced of it."

"They knew each other, which is significant," returned the other, "yet I would not accuse Bristowe of partiality."

"They were rivals in a love affair," said the first, "if the rumour I have heard is true, and Bristowe lost!"

"H'm! That disposes of the partiality theory," rejoined the second man. "The partiality would have been the other way about!"

Sir Henry Bristowe returned to his residential flat, and asked that a light supper might be brought to him.

"You can leave the things, Mrs. Oakley," he said to her. "I shall not want to be disturbed, so you can clear them away in the morning."

Mrs. Oakley sat in her own little chamber reading the evening paper, when a ring at the outer door disturbed her. On answering the ring she saw Edith Northcote, whom she did not know.

"Sir Henry Bristowe is at home, ma'am," she replied in response to Edith's inquiry, "but he is in his study, and does not wish to be disturbed."

"Ah, yes, that is to the ordinary caller!" said Edith. "I am an old friend, and he won't mind my going in. You need not trouble to announce me!"

Before Mrs. Oakley could say anything to the contrary, the visitor had passed her and hurried to the door of the study. Knocking gently and receiving no reply, she went in and saw the Recorder sitting in front of the fire, his elbow resting on the arm of the chair, and his head supported on his hand. He was gazing steadily at the fire, by the glow of which she could see that his face was deathly white.

A pang shot through her; it had cost the upright judge a great deal to make that summing-up!

"I have come to thank you for what you did for me to-day!" she said gently.

But Sir Henry made no movement. She raised her voice slightly.

"You saved the life of the man I loved and restored him to me. I shall regard you as my greatest friend as long as I live. How can I ever thank you sufficiently?"

Still no movement. With a sudden chill at her heart, she approached him and bent over him; she recoiled with a cry at the moment Mrs. Oakley entered.

"He is dead!" she cried.

It was true. Sir Henry Bristowe, the Recorder, had gone to stand before another Judge and had taken with him the true story of the struggle between love and duty and the method in which he had solved the problem.

Orme Lewi

Digitized by Google

£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE!

In Addition to £1,000 in Cash.

THE MOST LIBERAL PRIZE EVER OFFERED BY ANY PERIODICAL IN THE WORLD.

THIS prize is so huge that it is almost impossible for one to realise at first thought what it really means. Therefore the following hints will probably enable you to grasp the full value of such a regular income:

£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE means, unless you are extravagant, absolute freedom from money troubles as long as you live.
£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE is an insurance against depression and mental worry.
£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE will enable you to dispense charity with a liberal hand.
£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE will buy you a bigger house and enable you to live in better style.
£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE will cover the cost of taking a cottage in the country and living there in comfort for the rest of your days.
£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE will pay the expenses of months of foreign travel.
£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE will buy anything you can possibly want, from a piano to a motor-car.

In fact, there is no limit to the things you can do with **£5 A WEEK FOR LIFE.**

THE prize will be paid to the person (perhaps you) who correctly solves the pictures which appear below, together with other pictures which will appear in PEARSON'S WEEKLY under the conditions printed in that paper.

Each picture consists of certain objects, the names of which represent the name of a railway station in the United Kingdom. For example, the hull of a ship would mean "Hull." Every name will be found in Bradshaw's Railway Guide.

A further sum of **£1,000 in cash** will be distributed as consolation gifts amongst those who come next to the first winner in the following manner:—

FIRST CONSOLATION GIFT, £100.

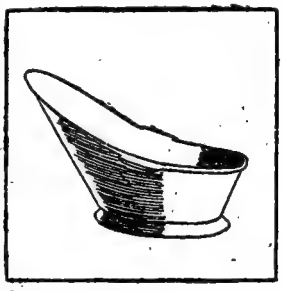
2nd Cash Gift ...	£50	6th Cash Gift ...	£25
3rd ,, ...	£50	7th ,, ...	£25
4th ,, ...	£25	8th to 57th Cash Gifts ...	£10 each
5th ,, ...	£25	58th to 97th ,, ...	£5 each

So you see, even if you do not succeed in securing the first prize of £5 a week for life (*which will be paid under any circumstances*), you have a good opportunity of securing one of the cash gifts.

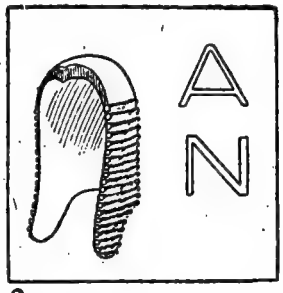
If you find out the names of the railway stations represented by the pictures shown here, you should write down the name under each, put your name and address at the foot, and then

Get a Copy of Next Week's "Pearson's Weekly."

☞ If you are unable to secure a copy of PEARSON'S WEEKLY, drop a reply post-card to the Publisher, PEARSON'S WEEKLY, Henrietta St., London, W.C., and he will get you out of your difficulty. ☜



1.....



2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

Write your Name and Address here .....

Didn't Like to Resist.

MRS. MCBRIDE (entering the kitchen): "Bridget, didn't I see that policeman kiss you?" Bridget: "Well, mum, sure an' yez wouldn't hev me lay mesilf opin to arrist for resistin' an officer, mum."

Prepared for Emergencies.

HE: "If you loved me why did you at first refuse me?" She: "I wanted to see what you would do." He: "But I might have rushed off without waiting for an explanation." She: "I had the door locked."

Then He Wouldn't Stay Long.

SHE: "Papa says that when coming to see me you must not come in a 'bus any more." He: "Really! Does he expect me to walk all this distance?" She: "Of course not. He says all he asks is that you will come in a carriage, hired by the hour."

A Permanent Cheek.

HER head had dropped upon his shoulder. "If only," he whispered, "thy cheek could remain there for ever." Little thought he what was to be. Little thought he until he got home and tried to remove her cheek from his dress coat with ammonia and alcohol.

She Could Teach Him.

MAY: "It is strange you have never learnt to waltz. Have you tried?" Jack: "Oh, yes; but I could never get past the first stage." May: "The first stage? What is that?" Jack: "To put my arm round the girl's waist." May (coyly): "I think I could teach you."

Father Understood.

"WHAT did you say that young man's name is?" asked Mabel's father. "Mr. Isaac Oliver Upton," was the reply. "H'm! I begin to understand." "To understand what?" "A remark that was made about Mr. Upton. I was told that he seldom wrote his name in full; that he nearly always used his initials."

A Hint.

HE was a lively fellow, and fond of her, but it didn't occur to him that a girl expected something else besides going to places and having fun all the time. "Anything on hand this evening?" he asked, coming breezily in, for the sixth time that week. "Well, no," she replied hesitatingly as she looked down at her empty fingers.

The Parrot Gave Her Away.

"I GAVE you that parrot as a birthday present, did I not, Matilda?" he asked. "Yes; but surely, Albert, you are not going to speak of your gifts as if——" "It was young and speechless at the time?" "Yes," with increasing wonder; "and it has never been out of this parlour." "There are no other young ladies in this house?" "No, there are not." "Then why—why when I kissed your photograph in yonder album, while waiting for you, did that wretched bird imitate your voice, and say, 'Don't do that, Charlie; please don't'?"

She Hesitated No Longer.

JUDGE: "What is your age?" (Female witness hesitates.) Judge: "Don't hesitate in answering the question. The longer you hesitate the older you'll be."

A Handy Substitute.

KINGSLEY: "Don't you think it retards digestion to read a newspaper at mealtimes?" Bingo: "On the contrary I find it a great help. When the breakfast is a failure devour the paper."

Still Aristocratic.

NEIGHBOUR: "How did your daughter's marriage with that foreign count turn out?" Mrs. Brickrow: "Her last letter states that he has spent all her money, and she is taking in washing; but then I presume she washes only for the nobility."

Wasn't Certain.

ETHEL: "So Arthur proposed last night?" Maud: "Yes." Ethel: "And did you accept him?" Maud: "I was so awfully excited I don't know whether I accepted him or not. If he comes to-night I did, and if he doesn't I didn't."

Curing Him.

"MY dear," said Mr. Bunker to his wife, "what has become of that box of cigars you gave me on my birthday?" "It is upstairs." "Well, get it, please. Jimmy wants to smoke, and I think we can give him all he wants in about three seconds."

How he Kept Baby Quiet.

MR. NOOPOP: "My baby cries all night. I don't know what to do with it." Mr. Knowitt: "I'll tell you what I did. As soon as our baby commenced to cry, I used to turn on all the gas. That fooled him. He thought it was broad daylight, and went to sleep."

Afraid of a Mistake.

BRIDEGROOM (about to marry the youngest of three sisters): "My dear friend, I want you to stand immediately behind me during the ceremony, and keep your eyes open. I am very near-sighted, and I'm afraid they may substitute the oldest sister at the critical moment."

A Landlord in Gloom.

WIFE: "Who was that who called?" Husband: "One of my tenants to pay me his rent." "Did he pay it?" "Yes." "Then why do you look so gloomy?" "He didn't say anything about wanting fifty or sixty pounds' worth of repairs." "What of it?" "That shows he's going to leave."

Before and After.

MRS. F.: "You write such short letters when you are away. I don't see why you couldn't write me nice long ones, as you did when we were engaged." Mr. F.: "Honestly, my dear, I didn't suppose you would have any time to read them. In the days when we were engaged you had no housekeeping to attend to."

Why She was Unworthy.

SHE: "It cannot be. I am not worthy of you." He: "Nonsense." "It is true." "Impossible. You are an angel." "No, no, you are wrong. I am an idle, silly girl, utterly unfit to become your companion through life." "This is madness. What sort of a wife do you think I ought to have?" "A careful, calculating, practical woman who can live on your small salary."

Best to Begin Early.

"SHALL I have to get married when I grow up?" asked little Flossie one day of her mother. "Just as you please, dear," answered her mother with a smile. "Most women do, however." "Yes, I suppose so," continued the little girl musingly, "and I think I'd better start and look out for a husband now. They say that Aunt Jane has been at it for twenty years, and hasn't caught one yet."

Digitized by Google

The Gift of Roses.

The Love Story of the Second Violin.

Dicky Auber had often read of cases like his own—with this important difference; the stories usually ended happily, whereas he knew that for himself it would be madness to hope for anything save disappointment.

He was in love, desperately, madly in love with Nella Renshaw, a clever and popular actress, the admired of all admirers.

He enshrined her in his heart the very first time he saw her, which was the day on which he commenced his engagement as violinist in the orchestra of the London theatre at which she was playing a leading part.

He made no effort to check this hopeless love which grew and grew as he watched her night after night.

He could only see her when the action of the piece brought her well forward upon the stage; but he soon learnt to know when these places came, and was always ready for her so as not to lose a single second of the time that she was in his view.

Once her eyes met his upturned gaze. That night he walked to his poor lodgings with his head among the stars. After that he found her look turned towards him on several occasions. On those nights he lay awake for hours asking himself whether the smile in those beautiful eyes could possibly have been for him; but by morning he had called himself a fool for imagining for one instant that what was obviously an accident in her acting, could have any significance for him. Yet, for all his wise reasonings, those glances made him absurdly happy.

Then came a blow that hurt him cruelly. Nella was to tour in America. Even the pleasure of looking at her was now to be denied him. He would not see her for a long time—perhaps never again.

A farewell performance was announced, and, sad at heart, Dicky took his accustomed place. Before then he had always felt a thrill of pleasure and pride when came the thunders of applause in acknowledgment of Nella's superb art, but on this night it filled his heart with sadness and a great lump came to his throat. This was the last time that he would see the triumph of the woman he loved—the last time.

Then, as the curtain fell, he did a thing that he had never dared before to do. He quickly made his way to the stage door and waited there to watch her departure. As she passed him the fragrance of her dainty silks and laces seemed to hold his whole soul in bondage, and when her rustling skirt brushed him he nearly swooned.

She carried a magnificent bouquet that had been presented to her, and when she was half way to her carriage a rose dropped from it on to the pavement. Dicky darted forward and picked it up. Murmuring something, he knew not what, he stepped to the side of the carriage, and handed it to her.

As she took it she looked straight into his eyes. Then, quickly drawing another blossom from among its lovely fellows, she smilingly thrust it with the other back into his hands.

"Keep them, and—and—thank you," she said.

As the carriage drove off Dicky was staring in wonder at the exquisite flowers. Because of this he did not see that which would have filled his heart with an even greater joy. Her eyes had filled with tears.

Every now and again, during the year that followed, audacious thoughts filled Dicky's mind as he gazed on his most cherished possessions—two withered roses. Soon after, however, he usually read in some newspaper one of the numerous accounts of Nella's trans-Atlantic successes. Then his splendid hopes collapsed dismally. Yet they were always there, and though he did not know it, grew stronger and stronger until they became part of his life.

At last Nella came back. She was to open the Autumn season at her old theatre and once more Dicky could see her every night. He played first instead of second violin now and his position had been altered to one from which he had a far better view of the stage.

It was not that thought, however, which set his heart pounding with excitement as he went towards the theatre that day—the day on which he was to behold her again after a year. In his heart there was a great hope that she would recognise him in some way or another. Surely she *must*. Then he would wait at the stage door, and perhaps she would speak to him again.

Bitter and terrible was his disappointment. Not even a glance came his way.

The next day he was not at his place in the orchestra. Instead he sat at home in his room before a table covered with manuscript songs. They were those which he had written out of his great love.

Slowly, almost mechanically, he took them up and scanned every note. Then, having seen that all were as perfect as he could make them he gathered them together in a heap.

He was going away—where he did not know or care. During the last year he had so lived on the almost unconscious hope born in him by the gift of roses, that the realisation that it had been founded on nothing had dazed his every faculty. It was as though he had fallen from the clouds.

At first, when the wish to leave the place of his sorrow had come to him, he had determined to burn his songs; but they were his children—the only children of his love—and he could not. Then came a wild desire that she should know of his heart's longing, and, after examining them all to make sure that they, at least, were worthy of her attention, he gathered them together to send them to her.

He took the withered roses from his breast. She should have them too. Pressing them passionately to his lips he laid them tenderly on the top of the pile.

Then the stupor that had dulled his understanding went, and in its place an awful despair seized him. He laid his head on his arms and sobbed—sobbed as only can the man from whom is taken his only hold on life.

For a long while he lay. Then there came a tap at the door. He did not hear it. The door opened gently, and a woman entered. It was Nella. Quietly she stepped to the table. Her eyes rested on the roses. She read her name on the dedication of the song on which they rested and a great sob, half of sorrow, half of joy rose in her throat. Very tenderly she touched the bowed head.

Dicky started up and stared at her without comprehension. Then a light came into his eyes. "You?" he said, huskily.

"Yes, I," she answered, smiling.

"But—but—I——"

"Tell me," she said, stopping him; "why you kept those flowers?"

Though her voice was without emotion Dicky saw something in her face that sent the blood leaping in his veins. He rose, and drew her to him.

"Because I love you," he whispered, his voice almost fierce with joy.

It was Nella who wept now.

"Dicky," she sobbed, "when I didn't see you in the orchestra, I fancied all sorts of dreadful things, so I asked your address from the door-keeper—I knew your name from the very first—and came here to find out what had happened to you. Why didn't you write to me while I was away, Dicky? I thought you would understand when I gave you the flowers. Oh, Dicky, Dicky, I have loved you ever since I looked down into your eyes that night. I thought that you loved me until I went away and you did not write. Then I was miserable, Dicky. But it doesn't matter now!"

"Nothing matters now," said Dicky, and he kissed her on the lips.

Ernest Herbert.

Digitized by Google

OUR SPLENDID NEW SERIAL.

THE ALBERT GATE MYSTERY.

A Romance of To-day.

By LOUIS TRACY,

Author of "The Final War," "The Lost Lady Delia," etc.

Mr. Brett's Quest.

A NUMBER of priceless diamonds having been most mysteriously stolen from an Albert Gate Mansion, and four of the custodians of the jewels murdered, Mr. Brett, barrister and detective, in conjunction with the police, is called upon to help clear up the mystery.

The diamonds, it appears, were sent over by the Sultan of Turkey in charge of a number of Turkish officials, and, being of political importance, the mission was placed by the British Government in the care of Mr. Jack Talbot, of the Foreign Office. Upon the night of the robbery and murder, Mr. Talbot disappears.

The Earl of Fairholme, being engaged to be married to Talbot's sister, intrusts Brett with the finding of Talbot.

Brett's first clue is the statement of Mr. Winter, a Scotland Yard detective, that Mr. Talbot and a lady have been seen in Paris, Talbot having signed his name in a hotel register. Brett goes to Paris to see if the signature is genuine.

On his way he falls in with Captain Gaultier, a King's messenger, from whom he learns that Hussein ul Mulk, the Sultan of Turkey's nephew, who had fled from Turkey, is in Paris. Gaultier promises Brett an introduction. Meanwhile Brett has discovered that the signature in the hotel register is not in Talbot's handwriting.

Brett now wires to Fairholme to join him in Paris.

He suspects Hussein of having caused the diamonds to be stolen, and with a view to eliciting information regarding Talbot's whereabouts, pays a visit to the Turk.

Hussein admits complicity, and even allows Brett to see the diamonds which his agent had just brought in.

No sooner does Brett see them than he discovers that the stones are imitations, and immediately tells Hussein so. The agent is furious, but Brett proves his assertions by crushing one of the gems under his heel.

The agent, seeing that the game is up, decamps, but his destination is ascertained by Fairholme, whom Brett had stationed outside the door.

Subsequently Brett and Fairholme together visit the Cabaret Noir, to which the agent had retreated.

They discover nothing definite, Brett however suspects that Jean Beaucaire, the proprietor, and his daughter, who is known as La Belle Chasseuse, are implicated in the mystery. He therefore decides to visit the place alone, disguised as a wine sodden and decrepit old man.

This Week's Instalment.

What the Police Did.

MONTMARTRE by day and Montmartre by night are two very different places.

This Parisian playground, perched high upon the eminence that overlooks the Ville Lumière, does not wake to its real life until its repose is disturbed by the lamplighter. Then the Moulin Rouge, festooned with lamps of gorgeous red, flares forth upon an expectant world. The Café de l'Enfers opens its demoniac mouth to swallow ten minutes' audiences and vomit them forth again, amused or bored, as the case may be, by the delusions provided in the interior, whilst other questionable resorts shout forth their attractions and seek to beguile a certain number of sous from the pockets of sightseers.

The whole district is a place of light and shade. It is artificial in every brick and stone, in the very pose of every stall, the lettering of every advertisement. And so it flourishes by gaslight, but by day it is garish and forlorn.

Prominent among the regular houses of entertainment was the Cabaret Noir, which, between the hours of 9 p.m. and 1 a.m., usually drove a roaring trade. Situated as it was, in the very heart of a mountebank district, its patrons embraced all classes of society, from the American tourist with his quick eyes fastened upon the vagaries of demi-mondaines, to the sharp-witted Parisian idler, on the alert for an easy and dishonest means of obtaining money which might present itself.

Among such a crowd a wine-sodden and decrepit old man was not likely to attract particular attention.

He sprawled over the table close to one of the windows which commanded a view of the side passage that led to the rear of the building. Although none of the noisy crowd which occupied the café could suspect the fact, the half-closed eyes of this elderly drunkard noted the form and features of every individual who entered or left by the main door, whilst at the same time he paid the utmost possible attention to the comings and goings of any person who used the passage by the window.

To facilitate his observations in this direction he querulously complained to the waiter that the atmosphere was stuffy, and prevailed upon the man to raise the window a few inches, thus admitting a breath of clear, cold air.

Brett had previously ascertained from his agent that Gros Jean and his daughter were still in the private part of the building. No other visitor had put in an appearance, and so the time passed until the clock in the café marked eleven, without any incident occurring which could be construed as having even a remote bearing upon his quest.

Brett began to feel that his diligence that night would not be rewarded.

At five minutes past eleven, however, a pink-and-white Frenchman, neatly attired, unobtrusive both in manner and deportment, entered the café and seated

Digitized by Google

himself quietly near the door. He ordered some coffee and cognac, and lighted a cigarette.

The barrister, of course, took heed of him as of all others, and he would soon have placed him in the general category that merited no special attention, had he not noticed that the new-comer more than once glanced at the clock and then towards the corner bar, whence, it will be remembered, a small door led towards the billiard saloon in which La Belle Chasseuse had displayed her prowess with the pistol.

In such a community the stranger's self-possession and reticence were distinguishable characteristics. So Brett watched him, largely for want of better occupation.

"That is a man of unusual power," was his summing up. "He is elegant, fascinating, unscrupulous. Although apparently out of his natural element in this neighbourhood, he has some purpose in putting in an appearance in such a place as this at a late hour. Perhaps he is one of mademoiselle's lovers, though he looks the sort of person who would be singularly cool in conducting affairs of the heart, and most unlikely to wait many minutes beyond the time fixed for an appointment. His hands are large and sinewy, his wrists square, and, although slight in physique, I should credit him with possessing considerable strength. Being a Frenchman, he should be an expert with the foils. The effeminate aspect given to his face by his remarkable complexion might easily deceive one as to his real character. As a matter of fact, he is the only unusual man I have seen during my two hours' lounge in this corner."

Brett had hardly concluded this casual analysis of the person who had enlisted his close observation, when the private door into the bar opened and Mlle. Beaucaire entered.

Without taking the least heed of any of the numerous occupants of the café she turned her back upon them, and apparently busied herself in checking the contents of the cash register. Beyond this useful instrument was a mirror, and Brett at once perceived that from the point where she stood she could command a distinct reflection of the pink-and-white Frenchman.

The latter was gazing at the clock, and whilst doing so stroked his chin three times with his right hand. Immediately afterwards La Belle Chasseuse three times rang the bell of the register, and then, having apparently concluded her inspection, quitted the bar as unceremoniously as she had entered. Half a minute later the Frenchman finished the remains of his cognac, lit another cigarette, and passed into the street.

It was with difficulty that Brett restrained himself from following him, but he was certain that no one could leave the residential portion of the building without using the passage—a view of which he commanded from his window—and he resolutely resolved to devote himself for that night to shadowing the movements of the ex-circus lady.

His patience and self-denial were soon rewarded. A light, quick step sounded in the passage, and a shrouded female form shot past the open window.

Then the inebriated individual, now hopelessly muddled by drink, staggered towards the door and lurched wildly round the corner, just in time to see mademoiselle cross the Boulevard and daintily make her way between the rows of stalls.

The air seemed, however, to have a surprising effect upon the old gentleman, for the simple reason that to simulate drunkenness and at the same time keep pace with the lady's rapid strides was out of the question.

La Belle Chasseuse was evidently in a hurry, for she sped along at a surprising pace, until she reached a crossing where the rows of stalls and booths were temporarily suspended. At one corner stood a cab, and towards this vehicle she directed her steps. Before Brett quite realised what was happening, the door of the

BOVRIL

REPELS

INFLUENZA.

cab opened, Mademoiselle jumped inside, and, as if he had been waiting for her appearance, the driver whipped up his horse and drove off at a furious pace.

At that instant a small victoria with a sturdy pony in the shafts, which had just deposited a lively fare in the vicinity of the Moulin Rouge, drove along the street.

Brett sprang into it and said eagerly to the driver:

"Whip up your horse and keep that cab in sight. I will pay you double fare."

The man tightened his reins and raised his whip in prompt obedience to the order, when suddenly two men jumped into the vehicle from opposite sides, seized Brett and forced him down on to the seat, whilst one of them said in stern tones to the astonished cabby:

"Take us at once to the Central Prefecture of Police."

The man recognised that these new-comers were not to be trifled with. Without a word or a question, he rattled his horse across the stone pavement, and Brett, choking with rage at this interference at a supreme moment, realised that for some extraordinary reason he was a prisoner, and in the hands of a couple of detectives.

By this time the cab that contained the lady had vanished, but the barrister made one despairing effort.

"For Heaven's sake," he said to his captors, "take me where you will, but first follow that cab and ascertain its destination."

"What cab?" said one of his guards sarcastically.

"The cab which I wished our driver to overtake at the moment when you pounced upon me."

"This is a mere trick," broke in the other. "Don't bother about his cab. We have got him safe enough, and let the commissaire deal with him now."

"Listen to me," cried Brett. "You are making a frightful mistake. Your action at this moment may cause irretrievable delay and loss. If you will only do as I tell you——"

"Shut up," growled the first man, "or it will be the worse for you. Your best plan, my good fellow, is to keep a quiet tongue in your head."

It was not often that Brett lost his temper, but most certainly he did so on this occasion. He was physically a well-developed man, and for an instant the wild notion came into his head that he might perhaps succeed in throwing the two detectives into the roadway and then overpower the driver, taking charge of the vehicle himself and trusting to luck to again catch sight of the vanished lady and her companion, who, he doubted not, had awaited her arrival at the quiet corner, where she joined him.

Unconsciously he must have given some physical premonition of this desperate scheme, for the two policemen tightened their grasp upon him, forced his hands higher up his back, and bent his head forward until he was in danger of having either his neck or his shoulder dislocated.

"Will you keep quiet?" murmured the chief detective. "You cannot escape, and you are only making your affair more disastrous to yourself."

Then Brett realised that further resistance was hopeless. He managed to gurgle out that if they would allow him to assume a more comfortable attitude he would not trouble them any further.

Gingerly and cautiously the two men somewhat relaxed the strain upon him, and he was able to breathe freely once more.

Then he laughed, almost hysterically, but he could not help saying in English:

"The shadow of Scotland Yard falls upon me even here. Poor old Winter, how I will roast him over this adventure!"

"What are you talking about?" demanded one of the men.

"I was only thinking aloud," replied Brett.

"And what were your thoughts?"

"Simply this, that the sooner I meet your remarkably astute commissary the better I shall be pleased."

A Disconcerted Commissary.

THE journey across Paris proceeded without further incident, until they reached the prefecture.

The two detectives hurried their prisoner into a large general office, where he was surveyed with some curiosity by the subordinates lounging about a huge fire, whilst one of their number reported his arrival. After a brief interval he was taken into an inner office. Behind a green baize-covered table was seated a sharp-looking man, whose face was chiefly composed of eyebrows, pince-nez, a hooked nose, and a furious imperial.

This individual turned the shade of the lamp so that the light fell in its full radiance upon the face and figure of the prisoner. He produced a huge volume, and turned over its leaves until he reached the first vacant space, ruled and numbered for the description of all persons brought before him.

"Your name?" he said sharply.

"Reginald Brett," was the reply.

The Frenchman required this to be spelt for him.

"Age?"

"Thirty-seven."

"Nationality?"

"English."

"Profession?"

"Barrister-at-law."

The official consulted a type-written document, which he selected from a mass of papers fastened by an indiarubber band. Then he looked curiously at the prisoner.

"Are you sure this is the man?" he said to the senior detective.

"Quite positive, monsieur."

"Then take off his wig and get a towel, so that he may remove some of his make-up. The rascal should be an actor. I never saw a better disguise in my life."

Brett knew it was hopeless to attempt explanations at this stage, so he readily fell in with their directions, and in a few seconds he stood revealed in something akin to his ordinary appearance.

Now the French Commissary of Police was no fool. He was an adept in reading character, but he was certainly puzzled after a sharp scrutiny of Brett's clear-cut, intelligent features. Nevertheless, he knew that the criminal instinct is often allied with the most deceptive external appearances. So he turned to the detective, and said:

"Tell me, briefly, what happened?"

"In accordance with instructions, monsieur," the man replied, "Philippe and I ascertained the movements of the prisoner at the Grand Hotel. During the afternoon he received messages from London and from some persons in Paris, which documents are now probably upon his person. He quitted the hotel at eight o'clock, disguised as you have seen. He called for a moment at a house in the Rue du Chaussée d'Antin, the number of which we noted, and then made his way to the Café Noir in Montmartre. There we watched him from the door for nearly three hours. He feigned drunkenness, but held communication with no person."

Digitized by Google

"Ha!" cried the commissary. This struck him as an important point, as he made a memorandum of it.

"Soon after eleven o'clock he rose hastily and quitted the café, crossed the boulevard, and hailed a cab. We would have followed him, but there was no other vehicle in sight. As our instructions were to arrest him at any moment he seemed likely to elude us, we seized him. He struggled violently and told us some story about his desire to follow another cab, which he said had disappeared. We saw no cab such as he described, and we treated his words as a mere device to abstract attention. We were right. A moment later he made an attempt to escape, and we were compelled to use considerable force to prevent him from being successful."

The commissary turned his eyes upon the prisoner and was seemingly about to question him when Brett said with a smile:

"Perhaps, monsieur, you will allow me to say a word or two."

"Certainly," said the official, who knew that criminals generally implicated themselves when they commenced explaining matters.

"You are acting, I presume," said the barrister, "in obedience to reports received from the London police with reference to the murder of four Turkish subjects at Albert-gate, and the theft of some valuable diamonds belonging to the Sultan."

This calm summary of the facts seemed to disconcert the Frenchman. It astonished him considerably to find his prisoner thus indicating so clearly the nature of the charge to be brought against him.

"That may be so," he admitted.

"It is so," went on Brett, "and in this matter you are even more hopelessly idiotic than I took you to be. I have told you my name and profession. I am a friend of Mr. Talbot, the English gentleman who has been spirited away in connection with this crime, and I have in my pocket at this moment a letter from the British Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs authorising me to use my best efforts towards elucidating the mystery and tracking the real criminals. Here is the letter," he continued, producing a document and laying it before the amazed official.

"I was on the point of making an important discovery with reference to this case when these too zealous agents of yours seized me and absolutely refused, even whilst I was a prisoner in their hands, to follow up the definite clue I had obtained. It is an easy matter to verify my statements. The authenticity of this letter will be proved at the British Embassy, whilst a telegram to Scotland Yard will place beyond doubt not only my identity, but my bonâ-fides in acting for Mr. Talbot's relatives and the Foreign Office. Further, an inquiry made at the Grand Hotel will produce unquestionable testimony from the manager, who knows me, and from my friend, Lord Fairholme, who occupies rooms there at this moment."

"Lord Fairholme," stuttered the official. "Why, that is the name given by the other prisoner."

"Do you mean to say you have arrested the Earl of Fairholme?" gasped Brett, struggling with an irresistible desire to laugh.

The Frenchman covered his confusion by growling an unintelligible order, and bent over the letter which Brett had given to him. In half a minute one of the detectives returned, and with him was Fairholme, upon whose honest face indignation and astonishment were struggling for the mastery.

"Oh, surely that cannot be you, Brett!" cried his lordship the moment he entered the room. "Well, of all the silly fools that ever lived, these French Johnnies take the cake. I suppose that they have spoilt the whole business! If the brutes had not taken me by surprise I would have knocked over a dozen of them before they arrested me."

Living Skeletons.

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM LIFE.

WE are all familiar with the living skeleton or professional lean man of the side show, whose leanness is due partly to bad nutrition, and partly to the fact that by means of purgatives he expels the food from his system before it has time to be fully absorbed.

In his case the emaciation is intentional, but there are scores of cases where it is quite the reverse, and brought about entirely by imperfect digestion and general ill-health. In such cases Bile Beans for Biliousness will be found a sure and speedy remedy, as the following plain statement of fact goes to prove. The story comes from Mr. George Blanchard, of Morley Street, Kettering, and was told by him to a "Kettering Guardian" reporter. He said: "For seventeen years I suffered from acute indigestion, which steadily became worse till at last my doctor gave me up as incurable, and I came to be looked upon as dying. I had violent pains in my sides and stomach, which latter was always distended with wind; and though I belched incessantly I found no relief, for the simple reason that the wind kept forming as fast as I could get rid of it. Every morsel of solid food I swallowed seemed to turn to wind, and also brought on severe fits of vomiting, which shook my whole system.

I had to leave off taking solid food altogether, and subsist entirely on liquids. As a consequence I became so weak that I could hardly drag one foot after the other, while my limbs wasted away till they were no thicker than those of an infant! To add to my misery, I suffered also from dizziness and profuse sweats. As I have said, I had medical advice, but derived no benefit and after a time was told by my doctor that he could do nothing more for me, and that I should never again be well. At this I abandoned hope and made up my mind for death. "I was in this pitiable condition when my wife chanced to read of the marvellous cures effected by Bile Beans for Biliousness and we got a box. I began taking them, and soon realised that I had at last found the right thing. The stomach pains ceased gradually as did also the vomiting. The flatulence and dizziness disappeared, and I began to regain strength. All this time I had been taking Bile Beans regularly, and continued to do so, till now I am well and strong again and feel better than I have done for twenty years. I can strongly recommend Bile Beans for Biliousness to anyone suffering as I did from indigestion, dizziness, stomach pains, vomiting, or weakness. Their effect is truly wonderful."

REAL DEVONSHIRE CREAM

(CLOTTED.)

Absolutely pure; no preservatives used; the most efficacious substitute for cod liver oil; invaluable for children and invalids.

½lb. 1s. 4d., 1lb. 2s. 4d., 2lbs. 4s. 4d., free.

Supplied constantly to the Countesses Cadogan, Pembroke, Sefton, Dundonald, Guilford, Lichfield, &c., by

MRS. CONYERS,

Morchard-Bishop, Devon.

Digitized by Google

"Silence," shrieked the commissary, upon whose mind was dawning the consciousness that he had committed an outrageous blunder.

"What did you say your name was?" he demanded fiercely.

"I told you my name an hour ago," said his lordship haughtily, "and if you had not been so beastly clever you would have believed me. I am the Earl of Fairholme, a fact that can be readily substantiated by dozens of people here in Paris, and this is Mr. Reginald Brett, a friend of mine, who would have probably discovered the mystery of my friend's disappearance and the whereabouts of those diamonds by this time if you had not so stupidly interfered."

His lordship was hardly coherent with annoyance, but the cute official had now convinced himself that a stupid mistake had been committed by his department.

He became apologetic and suave. He explained that their mysterious proceedings had to some extent committed them in the eyes of the police to secret knowledge of the crime which had so thoroughly aroused the detective departments in both London and Paris.

Evidently Scotland Yard had not advised the French police of Mr Brett's official connection with the hunt for the murderers. The agents of the Paris Bureau had watched Brett's coming and going during the whole day, and the detectives' suspicions, once aroused, were intensified when his friend, Lord Fairholme, sought the aid of two uniformed policemen to break in the door of the Turkish residents in the Rue Barbette.

Even now, politely concluded the commissary, he would regretfully be compelled to detain them for a little while, until he verified their statements. Meanwhile, they would not be subject to any further indignities, and might procure such refreshments as they desired. They would probably be set at liberty within a couple of hours.

At 1.30 a.m. Brett and Fairholme were ushered forth from the doors of the prefecture, and stood in freedom in the street.

"Where now?" said Fairholme.

"To the hotel," replied Brett wearily. "I must have sleep, so I consign the Turks, and the Sultan's diamonds, and everyone concerned with the Albert-gate mystery to perdition for the next eight hours."

Brett Reviews Progress.

NOTWITHSTANDING his weariness, Brett rose early in the morning. His companion slept like a top, and the barrister had to shake the earl soundly by the shoulder before the latter woke into conscious existence and sat up in bed sleepily demanding:

"What's up? Where's the fire?"

"I want you to dress at once," said Brett cheerily, "and join me at breakfast. You must leave for London by the 11.50 train."

"Am I such a nuisance then that I have to be packed off at a moment's notice?" said the earl.

"By no means. Decidedly the contrary in fact. As matters in France evidently require persistent attention on my part for many days, perhaps weeks, I think it is hardly fair to leave Talbot in confinement any longer. Your mission is to restore your prospective brother-in-law to the bosom of his family, and I regret that it is impossible for me to accompany you."

"Are you serious, old chap?" was the startled answer.

"What has happened since one o'clock this morning to make you so confident?"

"Nothing that is not already known to you. Had I succeeded last night in following Mdlle. Beaucaire to her destination, I might have been able to accompany you to London this morning. As it is, Heaven alone knows what sort of dance she may lead me. However, you complete your toilette, my dear fellow. I have ordered breakfast to be served in a quarter of an hour. Then you can eat and listen."

During the first portion of the repast Brett seemed too busily engaged to unburden his mind. It was not until he had lit a cigarette and pushed his chair away from the table, so that he could assume a posture of complete ease, that he commenced:

"You slept so soundly, Fairholme, that you have not had time to review all the circumstances of yesterday's adventures. Otherwise I am sure you would have reached the same conclusions as suggest themselves to me. Curiously enough, although dog-tired when I went to bed, I woke about seven o'clock feeling thoroughly rested both in mind and body. I procured some coffee, took a bath, and went out for a stroll, with the result that I returned and aroused you after reaching finality in some of my conclusions, and deciding upon a definite plan of action for both of us."

"It is really very decent of you, Brett, to constantly assume that I can see as far through a brick wall as you can, especially as you know quite well that, although I am fairly well acquainted with all that happened yesterday the only tangible opinion I can offer is that the Paris police interfered with you at a most inopportune moment."

Brett smiled. "That is because you have not accustomed yourself to analysis," he said. "However, I will summarise my views, and if you can find any flaws in my reasoning I will be glad. The first thing to observe is that the diminutive Frenchman drew upon himself the special vengeance of the Turks when I exposed the attempt to foist upon them a collection of dummy diamonds. Yet he actually had the nerve to return to the Rue Barbette later in the day. He has not been seen since, so the little scoundrel is either dead or a prisoner in Hussein ul Mulk's flat. As I cannot permit myself to participate in a murder or even in illegal imprisonment, I am regretfully compelled this morning to take the police into my confidence and inform them of an obvious fact which escaped their penetration yesterday."

Fairholme whistled.

"I must say," he cried, "I gave a passing thought to the incident myself last evening when your spy reported that the Frenchman remained in No. 11 after the Turks had quitted it."

"Yes," said Brett. "You see all you need to cultivate is the habit of deduction and you will soon become a capital detective."

The Earl laughed. "I hope you will tell that to Edith," he said, "and perhaps you may change her opinion concerning my reasoning capacities. She thinks I am an awfully stupid chap as a rule."

"That is because she is in love with you," said Brett.

"Well, now, that remark puzzles me more than anything else you have said." His lordship darted a quick look at the barrister in the endeavour to learn whether or not he was in a chaffing mood.

Digitized by Google

Curing Catarrh without Operation.

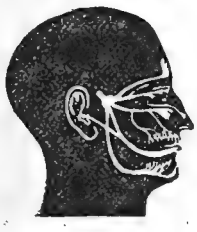
THE editor of the "Journal for the Deaf" and "Review of Diseases of the Ear, Nose and Throat," has been quietly investigating the much-praised method of treating catarrh by burning the inside of the nose with a wire, heated red hot by electricity and by other operative methods. Out of 1,000 cases presented at the Drouet Institute for diagnosis, he found 522 (over one half) had been treated previously and that 38 of these had undergone several operations, the only effect being a depression of the patient's general health, and in some instances an aggravation of the catarrhal ailment. In contrast with this are published in the "Journal" several cases illustrating the cure by the Drouet method, where several operations had failed. Those who wish to read the full details of the cases and the editorial comments on this subject can obtain a free copy of the "Journal" by addressing the editor, 10 Marble Arch, London, W. With the "Journal" is also sent a Patient's Report Form, by means of which anyone can obtain free advice by correspondence and instructions for home treatment. The editor advises patients, however, when possible to visit the Institute for a personal consultation with the medical staff. Consulting hours are, in the morning, 10 to 12, and in the afternoon, 2 to 4, week days only. A fee of five shillings is charged for personal consultations.

GIVEN AWAY
with this week's
HOME NOTES
(No. 471.)
PAPER PATTERN of this
Child's Combinations.
Of all Bookstalls and Newsagents,
PRICE ONE PENNY.

SEE FOR YOURSELF
THE ENORMOUS SAVINGS
that will result from Dealing Direct with
H. SAMUEL
A POSTCARD SENT TO-DAY
will bring you his
BIG FREE GUIDE
200 Pages. Over 3,000 Engravings.
Do your shopping at home. Obtain goods of the highest possible quality at
LOWEST FACTORY PRICES.
POCKET THE MIDDLE PROFITS!
Ladies' Gold Watches, 21/-; Gent's Silver Watches, 8/6; Real Silver Albertis, 3/9; Gold Gem Rings, 3/6; Cutlery, Plate, and all Household Requirements.
A SAVING OF HALF YOUR USUAL OUTLAY.
FREE PRIZES TO ALL BUYERS. SELECT YOURS WHEN ORDERING. SEND A POSTCARD AT ONCE.
H. SAMUEL, Dept. 29, Market St., MANCHESTER.

MACKINTOSH'S
IS DELICIOUS! DELICIOUS! DELICIOUS!
PUREST OF THE PURE. Sold Everywhere.
A very large Sample Packet sent post free for eight penny stamps. J. MACKINTOSH Ltd., The Toffee Mills, HALIFAX. *Wholesale dealers should stock this Toffee as it sells at sight.*
EXTRA CREAM TOFFEE

ESTABLISHED 1851.
BIRKBECK BANK,
Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London.
2½% DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS 2½%
repayable on demand.
The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free.
C. A. RAVENSCROFT, *Managing Director.*

ZOX for Neuralgia at Night.
GIVES INSTANT RELIEF TO HEADACHE, TOOTHACHE, NERVE PAINS

Any Sufferer Sending Stamped Addressed Envelope May Try Zox FREE.
Neuralgia is a Disease of the Nerves, and most commonly attacks the nerves of the face. Its presence is announced by the most piercing darting pains, recurring in paroxysms, followed with brief intervals of relief; but hardly a moment elapses after a lacerating pain darts along the course of the affected nerve ere another shoots forth, inflicting pain equally distressing to the patient. The annexed cut presents in the prominent lines the nerves of the fifth branch, which are most liable to attacks of Neuralgia. All who suffer from this terrible pain, or from Headache, Toothache, or nerve-pains generally, will be glad to know of ZOX, a Simple, Safe and easy Remedy certified free from injurious substance by no less an authority than Dr. A. B. Griffiths, F.R.S. The Proprietors offer to send Two Free Sample Powders to any reader of "Short Stories," who will send them a stamped addressed envelope.
ZOX is sold by Chemists, &c., at 1s. and 2s 6d. per box, or can be had post free from
THE ZOX COMPANY, 11 Hatton Garden, London, E.C.

"Why should a woman seek to depreciate anything she values?"

"Simply because it denotes a secure sense of complete ownership. Miss Talbot would never dream of such a pretence as to your intellectual powers if you were merely a friend."

"Well," said the earl dubiously, "that is a new point of view for me at any rate."

"It is a fact nevertheless. But we have not much time, so we must reserve to another opportunity any further consideration of feminine inconsistency. The fate of the Frenchman must be determined to-day, and to decide the question I must act through the police, so a conversation with our friend the commissary becomes inevitable. And now to return to the hypothetical part of my conclusions. I began by assuming that the individual who planned the Albert-gate outrage and subsequently sought to bamboozle his employers by palming off on them a set of spurious diamonds, is far too acute to attempt to dispose of the real gems for many months yet to come. He obtained sufficient funds from the Turks, in pursuance of what may be termed the legitimate part of his contract, to enable him to live for a considerable period without further excitement. Closely associated with him in the present adventure is La Belle Chasseuse. Neither of them would endeavour to procure safety by flight to a foreign country. They will seek rather to court insignificance by living in a normal and commonplace manner. What more easy, for instance, for Mademoiselle than to return to the life of the circus, whilst her lover—granted that he wished to remain in her company—will obtain some suitable employment in the same circle. There is a suspicion of a joke in the statement, but I am quite serious. The mere consciousness that they have in their possession a vast fortune, which time alone will enable them to realise, will serve as an inducement to undergo the period of hard work which in their case means safety. You remember that the lady's father, Gros Jean, visited the Gare de Lyon yesterday?"

Fairholme nodded.

"I think you will find that he was depositing there the necessary luggage for a contemplated trip into the interior, so that Mademoiselle might slip out late at night quietly and unnoticed and join her lover at some preconcerted rendezvous, a thing which we now know she did. I cannot, of course, be certain whether the Frenchman who signalled to her in the Café Noir was himself the favoured individual. It is possible. By the way, what height is Talbot?"

"About five feet nine."

Brett pondered for a little while.

"Yes," he communed aloud, "I think I am right. That pink-and-white Frenchman is the master mind in this conspiracy. And to think that the unintelligent muscles of a couple of thick-headed French policemen should have crudely interfered with me at such a moment!" He sighed deeply.

"Never mind," he went on, "it cannot be helped. I must keep to the thread of my story. Mademoiselle Beaucaire left the Cabaret shortly after eleven o'clock. We cannot be certain that she went to the Gare de Lyon, but the cab unquestionably set off in that direction. It is a long drive from Montmartre to the Lyons station. We will give her, say, until twelve o'clock to reach there. Now, unless she was journeying to some suburban district—a contingency which upsets the whole of my theory—there was no main line train leaving for the south until 1.5 a.m., and that is a slow train, stopping at nearly every station south of Melun. Let us suppose that they guard against every contingency. She and her companion wish to escape the scrutiny of detectives. It will at once occur to you that they run far more risk of observation if travelling by a fast express than if they elect to journey by the common place trains which only serve the needs of country districts."

"It did not occur to me," said Fairholme candidly. "Still, there is a lot in the idea all the same."

"Very well. To sum up, I imagine that the pair, providing the two travelled together, would break their journey south at some quiet town in the interior early in the morning, and subsequently proceed to their destination by easy stages."

"I am still fogged as to what you mean by their destination?" said Fairholme.

"I mean the circus, the music-hall, the café chantant, or whatever place mademoiselle and her astute adviser may select as a safe haven wherein to avoid police espionage during the many months which must ensue before they dare to make the slightest effort to dispose of the purloined diamonds."

"And how do you propose to follow them up?"

"I cannot tell at present. My movements depend upon the results of the inquiries I shall make to-day in theatrical circles, and particularly at the Gare de Lyon, where I shall not meet with success in any event until the night staff comes on duty."

(*A further splendid instalment next week.*)

EVERY WOMAN

should have a copy of

ETIQUETTE FOR WOMEN

A Book of Modern Modes and Manners.

By One of the Aristocracy.

Crown 8vo, Cloth. Price 1s.
Post Free 1s. 2d.

ORDER FORM. S.S.

To the Book Publisher,
17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Please send me a copy of
"Etiquette for Women." I inclose 1s. 2d.
"Etiquette for Men." ,, ,, 1s. 2d.

Name .....

Address .....

EVERY MAN

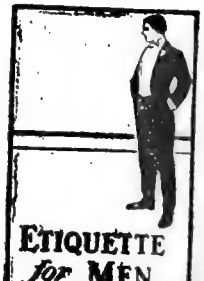
should have a copy of

ETIQUETTE FOR MEN.

By F. V. HOWARD.

This volume gives in a simple style full and accurate directions for the due observance of modern etiquette for men.

Crown 8vo, Cloth. Price 1s.
Post Free 1s. 2d.



Digitized by Google

ACTRESS MADE A STAR

—BY—

HYPNOTISM.

Under the Strange Spell She Carried the Audience by Storm—Famous in a Night.

Doctor John D. Quackenbos, professor in Columbia University, New York, astonished his associates of the Medico-Legal Society the other night by telling them how a young actress bounded into fame in a single night under the hypnotic spell. It is the case of a Trilby in real life; not the trick of a charlatan, but a sober, actual accomplishment of latter-day science. The new Trilby is a favourite with theatre goers. Her first appearance on the stage was made at a New York theatre, when, under the hypnotic spell, she carried the audience by storm; she was called before the curtain again and again—at a bound she was famous. The press of the city united in applauding her splendid work. This is only one of the many marvels of this wonderful power. The American College of Sciences of Philadelphia has recently issued a new book by twenty eminent hypnotic specialists, which is being distributed free throughout the country for the purpose of educating and protecting the public. It is one of the most weird and fascinating works ever written. It is richly illustrated with the finest engravings, and its vivid descriptions of the practical uses and possibilities of this marvellous mind-power fill one with awe and amazement. Among the many intensely interesting subjects treated are: How to hypnotise instantaneously; how to influence a person secretly without his knowledge; how to develop Personal Magnetism and use it in business, society, etc.; power of the human will; how to cure the most obstinate diseases and bad habits by magnetic forces without drugs or medicines; how to make people like you; how to win in business, in society, in love; anyone can develop personal magnetism; rules which will absolutely develop this power within a short time; the transmission of thought; the development of soul power; how to make a business man listen to you when he would send anyone else away; how to sell a man goods when he does not want to buy; a legitimate way to double your salary; how to keep people from influencing you; hundreds secretly influenced and controlled in body and mind without their knowledge; how to implant a suggestion or command in a subject's mind that he will carry out a week, month or a year hence, just as the hypnotist may wish; how to hypnotise by mail or by telephone; how to develop within yourself that inward power, that force of character, which instantly gives you a control over people without saying a word or making a single gesture. For the benefit of the public we wish to state that if you will write the American College of Sciences, Dept. W. L. 9, 420 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa., U.S.A., a copy of the above book will be sent to you by mail absolutely free of charge. The college guarantees this offer to be absolutely genuine, with no conditions attached. It is proposed to give away several thousands of copies of the book so that the public may learn the wonderful secrets of this marvellous but much misunderstood science.

"Worth a Guinea a Box."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS AND NERVOUS DISORDERS,

Sick Headache, *Constipation,*

Wind and Pains in Stomach,

Impaired Digestion,

Disordered Liver, and

Female Ailments.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

CONTAINING 56 AND 168 PILLS RESPECTIVELY.

Digitized by Google

Conducted by CYNTHIA.

[In this page are answered any letters from readers dealing with affairs of the heart, tangles in domestic life, or points of etiquette. All communications must be addressed to Miss Cynthia Hamilton, c/o the Editor of SHORT STORIES.*]*

Non-Love Problems.

YOUR questions, "KNOWLEDGE," though I should be most happy to answer them, do not quite come into my province. You would, I should think, find articles published on the subject of string work, such as the making of hammocks, in some boy's paper. I do not think that there is any paper published devoted entirely to swimming and diving, but you will find that the sporting dailies publish everything of interest on that subject; also those magazines which are devoted to athletics.

* * * *

You ask "Should you raise your hat to a girl each time if you see her several times a day?" No, is it not etiquette to do so. Raise your hat the first time, but if you see her several times later, either, if she gives you encouragement, go up and chat with her, content yourself with a smile of recognition, or turn your head in another direction.

❦❦❦

The Baby in Society.

"S. D." is a married woman with an only child, now aged two years, and able to walk and talk a little. "S. D." entertains friends a good deal, particularly on Sundays. Should the child be in the room when the friends are there, or would it be better for it not to appear?

* * * *

I think I should do what many married women in good social circles do. Let the baby enter and leave at a given moment. When the conversation has lagged a little, arrange that the baby, which will have to be dressed in its nicest clothes, shall enter. Let it stay for five or ten minutes, or as long as it interests the company, and then retire again. It is rather annoying to guests to have a baby continually in a room, as even the best of them are apt to be embarrassing, especially if you have any young men visitors. I know a young man who was asked to recite at a little gathering, and the whole time of the performance the baby was making caustic criticisms in an unknown tongue, which so upset him that he never visited the house again.

❦❦❦

A Secret Love Affair.

"MAUREEN" is sixteen, and has been meeting a youth for a year and a half without her parents' knowledge. They have now heard of it, and have forbidden her to see him. She asks me if it would be very wrong if they wrote to each other occasionally. She has told him that he must not speak to her for a year, at least.

* * * *

Your parents have evidently not forbidden you to write to him, so, until they do so, I suppose you are at liberty in that respect. I should not say there was anything wrong in your communicating with each other, though a great deal depends on the nature of the young man, and his age. If he is your own age, I can scarcely see why your parents should be so strict in the matter, as boy and girl friendships often lead to the happiest marriages in after life. But as you are only sixteen, it is impossible for me to advise you to disobey your parents. They probably understand how to deal with you rightly far better than I do.

❦❦❦

A Case for Patience.

"K. K." is very much in love with a girl, and in their correspondence has concluded that she returned his affection. When he proposed, she answered that she did not love him enough for marriage, but only cared for him as a friend. He pressed her very hard, but she said that, while she did not care for any other man, she had not considered the question of marriage. After more pressure on "K. K.'s" part, she gave him permission to renew his offer in a year's time. He asks, "Can a girl grow to love a man whom she does not meet or hear from?" "K. K." says that at one time he thought she cared a great deal for him, but through his own actions he fears he lessened her good opinion of him.

* * * *

I think the girl is quite right. Evidently she has not made up her mind as to the true state of her own feelings towards you. There are very many people who, while conscious of affection towards others, are not sure whether the sentiment is one to be called love. Some people cannot love in a passionate sense, but can only experience the strong affection associated with brothers and sisters, or great friends. Possibly this is the state of the girl's mind towards you. She is too honourable to pretend to feel what she does not, and wishes to let a year pass before giving you a decided answer. During that year, in which you will be parted from her, she will decide in her own mind whether you are or are not essential to her happiness. If the former case, I think you will hear from her long before the year ends. If she is able to wait as long as this without seeing you, I fear you must conclude that she does not return your affection sufficiently for marriage. Accept her wishes provisionally, and keep to their terms. Send her presents, as you say she wishes you to, but leave it to her to make the next declaration.

❦❦❦

An Interfering Mother.

"FLO" met last summer a young man who paid her great attention. When they parted, he wrote to her several letters couched in intimate vein. Then they suddenly ceased. For three months she heard not a word from him, until quite unexpectedly she met him. To her amazement he indignantly asked her why she had ignored his letters. She told him that since the early autumn she had not heard a line from him. The only suspicion "FLO" has, is that her mother, who is known to be opposed to the young man, has intercepted the letters and kept them from her. But "FLO" dare not accuse her mother of so doing. What had she better do?

* * * *

It is certainly not a nice thing to suspect one's mother of doing. I do not think even the best motives on her part would justify such conduct. If she objected to the man it would have been her duty to write to him herself and request him not to pay you attention. As you are not sure, I should advise you to confirm the suspicion before acting. Arrange that the man shall write to you on a definite date. If you do not get the letter, you will understand that it has been intercepted. If so, I should then ask your mother if she knows anything about it; and if she does you will have reason to be very much annoyed. However, do not let that estrange you. After all, she has probably done it out of a desire for your own good.

Cynthia.

Printed by HORACE COX, Bream's Buildings, London, E.C., and published by C. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

"NO BETTER FOOD."

Dr. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., &c.

Fry's

Pure Concentrated

Cocoa.

300 GOLD MEDALS, ETC.

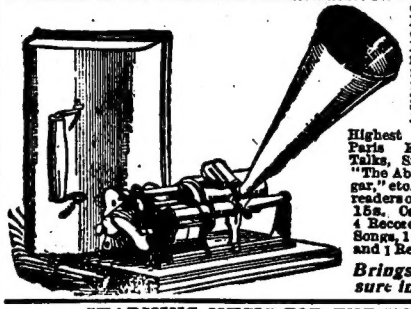
The MEDICAL PRESS, including the "LANCET," "BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL," and "MEDICAL ANNUAL," testifies to its

ABSOLUTE PURITY.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.—Sold only in tins with gilt top.

"THE MACHINE THAT TALKS."

CAMPBELL'S GRAPHOPHONE is the best Talking and Singing Machine in the Market at the Price.
A FASCINATING AND UNRIVALLED ENTERTAINER FOR THE HOME CIRCLE.

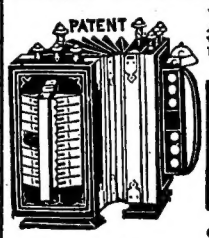


CAMPBELL'S HOME GRAND GRAPHOPHONE. This is no German manufacture, but the new American 20th Century Talking Machine, which gained the Highest Awards at the Paris Exhibition, 1900. Talks, Sings, and recites "The Absent-Minded Beggar," etc. Special price to readers of *Short Stories*, £2 15s. Carriage paid, with 4 Records free. 2 Vocal Songs, 1 Orchestral Piece, and 1 Recitation

Brings Endless Pleasure into the Home.

CHARMING MUSIC FOR THE HOME.

CAMPBELL'S Gold Medal MELODEONS



With Organ and Celestial Tone, and Sweet Bell Accompaniments. No Home should be without one. *No Knowledge of Music required.* Used throughout the world.

200,000 TESTIMONIALS.

Special Offer to the Readers of *Short Stories*

Campbell's "Gem" Melodeons, price only 6/9
Campbell's "Miniature" Melodeon, „ 10/9
Campbell's "Paragon" Melodeon, „ 14/-
Campbell's "Favourite" Melodeon, „ 16/6

Cut out this and send P.O.O. for the amount
Either sent carriage paid to any address in Great Britain & Ireland.

All lovers of music should at once send for Campbell's New Illustrated Privilege Price List of all kinds of Musical Instruments for Season 1901-2, now ready. 200,000 sent out yearly. Send 1d. Stamp to—
CAMPBELL & CO., Musical Instrument Makers, 116 Trongate, GLASGOW.
Established 50 Years. BEWARE OF WORTHLESS IMITATIONS.

SONGS COPIED.

Legible as print, **5d.** page; transposed correctly, **6d.** page. MRS. CONYERS, Morchard Bishop, Devon. Recommended by the Marchioness of Waterford, Lady Arthur Hill, Miss Ellen Terry, etc.

Mrs. Conyers,

MORCHARD BISHOP, DEVON.

DON'T COUGH *for* KEATING'S LOZENGES EASILY CURE THE WORST COUGH.

One gives relief. An increasing sale of over 80 years is a certain test of their value. Sold in 1½d. tins everywhere.

To CURE Drunkards

MRS. GEO. FULLER, *who saved her husband.*

There is a cure for Drunkenness which has shed its radiance into thousands of hitherto desolate homes. It does its work so silently and surely that while the devoted wife, sister, or brother looks on, the drunkard is reclaimed, even against his will or without his knowledge or co-operation.

This famous remedy has guided many a young man to sobriety and into the high road of fortune, and has saved the father, the brother, and the son.

If you send name and address to the Ward Chemical Company, 51 Century House, Regent St., London, W., they will post enough of the remedy free to show how it is used in tea, coffee, or food.

Mrs. George Fuller says:—"*I am only too thankful my husband never now wishes for intoxicating liquor. I gave him Antidipso in his tea and coffee, and it has quite cured him.*" With the

FREE TRIAL

Packet will be sent books and testimonials from hundreds who have been cured, and everything needed to save those near and dear to you. Don't neglect to write to-day.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.**, Sole Proprietor, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 2lb., and I am cured." Countess Furstenberg, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

A CELEBRATED

NELSON WATCH & CHAIN

FREE FOR ONE DAY'S WORK.

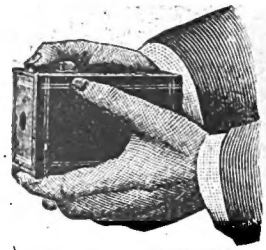
We send this Genuine Nickel-Plated WATCH, Warranted an ACCURATE TIME-KEEPER, with Chain and Pendant, for Selling Seven Beautiful Articles at 1/- each. Sterling Value. Send your full Name and Address (Post-card will do) by Return of Post, and we will at once forward the box of Handsome Goods, Post Paid, and a large Premium List. No Money Required. WE TRUST YOU. We send the Goods at our own risk. Send us the money that you get for them, and we send you the Watch, Chain and Pendant by Registered Post.

THE NELSON MANUFACTURING CO., 72, Aldersgate Street, London, E.C.

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

A KODAK FOR 5s.

THE NO. 1 BROWNIE.

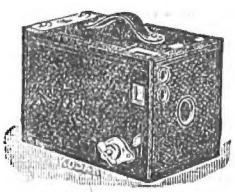


THE No. 1 BROWNIE.

Gives Pictures 2¼ by 2¼ inches.

Despite its small size and low price the No. 1 Brownie is a thoroughly efficient little camera, and yields photographs as clear and distinct as possible. No dark-room is needed for changing the films. In use the Brownie Kodak is simplicity itself.

THE NEW BROWNIE KODAK.



THE No. 2 BROWNIE.

THE NO. 2 BROWNIE.

Gives Pictures 3¼ by 2¼ inches.

MARVELLOUS VALUE. **PRICE 10/- ONLY.**

Finders for vertical and horizontal pictures. Everset time and instantaneous shutter. New and convenient spool-holding devices. Improved non-detachable winding key. Loaded and unloaded in daylight.

Ask for the Kodak Catalogue of all Photographic Dealers or of

KODAK Ltd., 43 Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C.

Wholesale and Retail Branches: 96 Bold Street, Liverpool; 72-74 Buchanan Street, Glasgow.

Retail Branches: 59 Brompton Road, London, S.W.; 60 Cheapside, London, E.C.; 115 Oxford Street, London, W.; 171-173 Regent Street, London, W.; 40 West Strand, London, W.C

Digitized by Google